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PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
NATURE, CHARACTERS,
AND
VARIOUS SPECIES
OF
COMPOSITION.

By JOHN OGILVIE, D.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Η πως αν αλλως συνεξη τοδε ΤΟ ΠΑΝ, ει μη ΡΥΘΜΩ τιτι και
ΤΑΞΕΙ δεκεκοσμητο. Και τα υφ' ημων κατασκευαζομενα οργανα
ΜΕΤΡΩ ΠΑΝΤΑ γυγνονται. Ει δε ΠΑΝΤΑ αλλα, πολλω γε
μαλλον Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ, ατε και ΠΕΡΙΕΚΤΙΚΟΣ ΑΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΩΝ.

ΛΟΝΤΙΝ. ΑΠΟΣΠΑΣ.

Of all the arts in which mankind excel,
Nature's chief master-piece is WRITING WELL.

BUCKINGHAM.

L O N D O N,

Printed for G. ROBINSON, in Paternoster-Row.

MDCCLXXIV.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the most flourishing ages of Greece and Rome, the various branches of the subject of this Essay employed the pens of authors, whose works every succeeding age has contemplated with admiration. In the present enlightened æra, to whatever frivolous objects the public taste may have been sometimes directed, the author cannot suppose that such a subject can fail of being in itself universally agreeable, as it naturally draws the attention as well of those who occupy the different departments of the Art, as of the reader who hath perused their writings with emolument or pleasure.—With regard to the execution in the present instance, every reader will judge for himself. The author will neither attempt to raise his esteem of it, by enlarging on the approbation with which it has been honoured by some respectable critics; nor to repress just censure by mean acknowledgments of timidity. He will take the liberty only to observe, that though the works of the most eminent ancient and modern wri-

ters on the subject of Composition have been consulted, and are often referred to in the present, yet far from following their track with servility, he has, upon some occasions, differed from them in opinion, and has even exposed their blemishes with freedom. This conduct will displease no reader who observes that it was necessary to give examples of the faults, as well as of the beauties of Composition; and that both are most clearly discerned, when contrasted properly with each other. Opinions which he judged exceptionable, he will likewise be excused for having attempted to refute, by those who acquit him of the only charges that render this conduct inexcusable—petulance, or malignity. Where the writers whom he consulted either suggested to his mind a certain train of observation, or served to confirm and illustrate such as occurred to him, he has never failed either to quote the passage from their works, or to throw it into the notes; which last, in a work of this kind, have been rendered unavoidably numerous and protracted. That this coincidence of sentiment did not occur more frequently, the author can only ascribe to the extensive view which he was led to take of his subject. His tract in the first part of the work (in which the intellectual powers

are

are considered as influencing Composition) he was left to chalk out for himself*. The lights thrown upon the other branches of it, particularly by the ancient critics, are stronger, and more diversified. He has therefore endeavoured at the same time to confirm his own observations by a variety of examples drawn from their writings, (the most striking of which are made intelligible to the English reader), and to relax the mind from rigid disquisition, by placing before it some capital strokes of the most consummate masters of the art. There is still another, and an important branch of the subject that remains to be treated; in which it is proposed to consider this divine Art as a principal means of promoting the civilization and the happiness of mankind. This view of it is necessary to complete the Author's original plan; though the critical part is fully comprised in what is now offered to the public. In so large a compass as is here taken, and on themes in canvassing which freedom of thought is not subjected to censure, there must be a corresponding variety of opinions. The writer does not form so idle an expectation, as that every reader will think in the

* See the two first Notes of Sect. I.

same manner as himself on each of these subjects. To the question therefore,—“ By what standard would you have your performance to be tried?”—he replies,—Let the same degree of candour and impartiality be employed in judging of the merit or defects of the following observations, which the author himself has applied to those of every author, ancient or modern, which in the prosecution of this attempt he hath had occasion to investigate.

N. B. The reader will observe that the terms Understanding, Judgment, Reason, are used to signify the same intellectual power, though the first of these, strictly speaking, is of larger import. This liberty the author took in order to avoid repetitions.

C O N T E N T S.

B O O K I.

Of Composition as it regards the Faculties
of the Mind.

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The following ERRORS were occasioned by the AUTHOR'S distance from the Press.

Page 29. line 6. of the note, for throw read thrown. P. 133. l. 7. for conflux read conflict. P. 149. l. 24 of the note, for in read of. P. 176. l. 11. for abstains read obtains. P. 202. l. 24. read in the art, &c. P. 209. l. 22. for a while read and while. P. 230. l. 8. of the note, for in concluding read to conclude. P. 238. l. 21. place the (;) after the word whatever. P. 247. l. 6. of the note, for Cinzas read Cineas. P. 271. l. 9. for or read for. l. 10. for mild read wild. P. 317. l. 3. of the note, dele the. P. 368. l. 12, 13. for perspicacity read perspicuity. P. 412. l. 9. after venture add to propose.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL
OBSERVATIONS
ON
COMPOSITION.

B O O K I.

*Of Composition as it regards the Faculties of
the Mind.*

S E C T I O N I.

*Introductory Observations on the Nature of
Composition.*

COMPOSITION will probably be contemplated by a mind that reflects on its nature, importance, and tendency, in the two following general lights. It will be considered in one view as the result of a peculiar combination, and propensity of the faculties of the mind: in another, as *an art*, distinguished by par-

ticular characters, divided into various species; and producing effects of the greatest importance to the civilization and happiness of mankind. It is proposed, in the present Essay, to examine this copious subject under these general heads: in the prosecution of which, after having endeavoured to point out the spheres of the intellectual powers in this art, to mark the signatures by which each is discriminated; to display their diversified combinations, and to lay down such rules as tend to bring these most nearly to an equipoise, when found to have been originally disproportioned; we propose to consider, in separate sections, the principal characters of classical composition; to take a view of its various species, as formed by the union of these characters; and to conclude the work by making some observations on the design, importance, and tendency of the art.

As it will be obvious to any person who hath read on this subject, that we must here understand the term Composition (thus comprehensively viewed) in a larger sense than hath formerly been assigned to it,

it*, we shall make a few remarks, in the present section, on the powers that occupy its

* Our meaning will be greatly mistaken, if it is supposed that any general censure is implied here on the authors who have examined this subject; as if their views of it had been contracted and defective. Far otherwise. By saying that the term Composition is taken in this Essay in a larger sense, or includes a greater variety of parts than these assign to it, we intend only to point out the difference betwixt a general definition, including every branch of a comprehensive art; and one adapted more immediately to some detached field, or department of it. The philosophical critic, it is obvious, may take a view of the present theme sufficiently adequate as far as this science is concerned, though propriety will require that it should extend to nothing beyond it. The same remark may be applied to poetry, eloquence, history, considered as species of one comprehensive art. In each it is obvious that the definition of this term, when applied to any of these separately, must necessarily include fewer objects, and take in a much less compass upon the whole, than when it is viewed as relating to all. It happens indeed frequently, that in consequence of that natural propensity, which every writer feels to place his own subject in as important a light as possible, and to make it comprehend the most various assemblage, accounts of these are pompously given, which dispassionate reason may reject as exaggerated. In this manner the different provinces of this art, instead of being properly discriminated, are promiscuously blended together,

its various departments; as necessary to place before the mind a full and appropriated idea of the subject*.

The

and the mind, after having considered what different writers have advanced on each, finds itself wholly at a loss to determine its bounds with precision. It is this circumstance principally which renders it a matter of so much difficulty to select, in treating particular subjects, the composition that it is best adapted to its nature. Hence the philosopher, either assuming too often the dress of the orator, or laying it aside altogether, in a sphere where he meets with models of each kind, is in hazard, according to the particular bias of his mind, of making too much, or too little use of the ornaments of discourse, by which means his expression is rendered either florid, or enervated and uninteresting. The observation hath equal force when applied to the other branches abovementioned. A general view of the art, in which we consider not only what constitutes the perfection of each character contemplated by itself, but in what manner the concurrence of all ought to distinguish its various species, must supply these defects if properly executed. The comparison of these last with each other likewise, will naturally produce a clearer and more particular notion of what is just and appropriated in each, than can be obtained by estimates formed from the writings of different authors, whose views have regarded single parts; and whose manner of treating them varies, according to their diversity of taste and disposition.

That

The faculties of the mind, whose offices in the province of composition we propose

That the ancients in general, who have examined the several branches of composition with great accuracy, lay down the best rules, and exhibit the noblest models for imitation in every department, will be called in question by no man who is conversant with their works. Many modern performances both abound with precepts, and display examples that are equally admirable. It is a considerable part of our business in the following work to confirm this truth, partly by a critical examination of such observations, particularly of the former, as relate most immediately to the present subject, carried on with the utmost impartiality; and partly by illustrations of the characters by which the art is distinguished, drawn from the most eminent performances, both ancient and modern. The author intends only from the remarks made in this note to suggest a plea in his own vindication, to those who may censure him for having made choice of a theme that hath employed the pens of so many illustrious writers; and an excuse for his differing in opinion so often from some of them. The relation in which he was led to consider one part as standing to another, makes him assign a narrower precinct to it, than would probably have been the case, had he considered each of these apart. This the reader will keep uniformly in his eye.

* We propose here to lay before the reader some of

to consider separately, and even if possible to determine with some precision, are the understanding,

the various meanings that have been given to the word Composition by authors of the greatest eminence, in order to confirm an observation made in the preceding note. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his excellent treatise ΠΕΡΙ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΕΩΣ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΩΝ, enters upon his subject by explaining the sense of this term, which he considers in two different lights. His first definition is general, relating to the common acceptance of the phrase. Η ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ *εστιν, ωσπερ και αυτο δηλοι ονομα, ΠΟΙΑ ΤΙΣ ΘΕΣΙΣ ΠΑΡ' ΑΛΛΗΛΑ ΤΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΟΥ ΜΟΡΙΩΝ ΣΥΓΓΡΑΜ*: Tom. 2. p. 2. edit. Lipsic. This account of the art, in which the whole weight lies upon a due distribution or order of parts, includes unquestionably one principal province of composition. But considered as a definition of the subject taken in one comprehensive view, it is defective, as we receive from it no idea of the propriety and harmony of modulated language corresponding to the sentiment of a work, or of beauty arising from happy illustration. These points, however, are fully included in his next definition, which relates to his own subject, and is much more particular. *Εστι δε της ΣΥΝΘΕΣΕΩΣ ΕΡΓΑ οικειως θειναι τατε Ονοματα παρ' αλληλα, και τοις κωλοις αποδουναι την προσηκουσαν ΑΡΜΟΝΙΑΝ, και ΤΑΙΣ ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΙΣ διαλαβειν αυτου ολον τον Λογον.* *ibid.* These definitions of the term ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ, exhibit an idea of it, only incomplete as they

derstanding, the imagination, or inventive power; discernment, as indicating the operation

they regard not its connection with a certain union of intellectual powers, an omission for which our author is no way culpable, because this view of the art falls not in with his subject. Another ancient Critic, who appears to have taken a pretty full view of composition, defines it very particularly. ΑΠΑΣ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΝΝΟΙΑΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΧΕΙ, ΚΑΙ ΜΕΘΟΔΟΝ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΝΝΟΙΑΝ, ΚΑΙ ΛΕΞΙΝ, Η ΤΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΗΦΗΡΜΟΣΑΙ. ΤΗΣ ΔΕ ΑΥ ΛΕΞΕΩΣ ΕΧΟΥΣΗΣ ΠΑΝΤΩΣ ΤΙΝΑ, ΚΑΙ ΑΥΤΗΣ ΙΔΙΟΜΑΤΑ, ΠΑΛΙΝ ΑΥΤΕ ΧΗΜΑΤΑ ΤΕ ΕΣΤΙΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΩΛΑ ΣΤΥΧΘΕΣΕΙΣ ΤΕ, ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΠΑΤΣΕΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΕΞ ΑΜΦΟΙΝ ΤΑΥΤΟΙΝ ΣΥΝΙΣΤΑΜΕΝΟΝ Ο ΡΥΘΜΟΣ. ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝ: ΠΕΡΙ ΙΔΕΩΝ. βιβ. Α. κεφ. β'. The critic it is true hath a regard in this account, principally to eloquence, or the art of persuasion. But the definition is full, and appropriated as far as the subject required it to be so. Its defect, as a complete view of composition, is the same as in the former instance, and for the reason formerly assigned. The great ancient Critic has treated of several different branches of composition in many parts of his writings. In his first book on rhetoric, particularly, he assigns a distinct chapter to each distinguished character of this art. But his sentiments of the subject in general we must collect from different parts of his works. Thus he observes, that by a just arrangement of parts we acquire clear ideas of objects that are at first obscurely known to us, ΦΥΣΙΚ: βιβ. Α. κεφ. α'. and infers the necessity of mentioning

ration of both; and memory, whose use we shall endeavour particularly to specify.

The

mentioning the members of which a subject consists particularly and fully, in order to render it thoroughly intelligible and useful, *ibid.* He considers the rhetorical art under three general divisions, which comprehend different species of composition, the philosophical in particular. These are the ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΗΤΙΚΟΝ, ΔΙΚΑΝΙΚΟΝ, and ΕΠΙΔΕΙΚΤΙΚΟΝ. ΡΗΤΟΡΙΚ. βιβ. Α. κεφ. γ'. Lastly he points out with great precision, the method of laying down an accurate disposition, *id.* βιβ. Γ. κεφ. ιγ'. and ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣ. βιβ. Γ. κεφ. ιδ'. But as he treats not systematically of the subject of this essay as a general term including many subdivisions, a definition of it regarding its origin, and comprehending its various branches fell not in with his designs. Longinus, whose sphere is much more contracted than that of our great philosopher, takes notice of a ΣΥΓΚΛΕΙΟΥΣΑ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΙΣ, as the last ingredient of the sublime, and necessary to connect the other four sources which he had previously enumerated, into one body. ΠΕΡΙ ΥΨΟΥΣ. τμημ. η'. and αθ'. But as this regards only a particular character of it, which will be examined in its place, we have but just mentioned it here. Of Roman writers who have treated of the present subject, the judicious and elegant Quintilian is by far the most copious and particular. In his well-known work, intitled *Institutiones Oratoriae*, (of which the reader will find much use made in the

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The three first mentioned of these, though employed in spheres that are distinct from each

the following essay, and whose excellence is equal to almost any eulogium) the present subject is discussed by itself. The fourth section of his ninth book contains his observations on it. Here he considers three things as constituting just composition, order, or a due arrangement of parts; connection, (*junctura*) or a just correspondence of the members of a sentence, as well as of words to each other; and harmony, (*numerus*) or the graceful and melodious structure of periods. We shall have occasion afterwards to examine what he hath advanced on these heads. At present we need only observe, that his view of composition, as an art, principally regards expression, which is the least part of it; and even here likewise he hath a particular regard, as we might naturally expect, to eloquence, which is his subject. It would be an endless task to select from the writings of the illustrious Roman orator and philosopher, the different views that are presented to us of composition. There is neither a character nor species of it which he hath omitted to examine at one time or other in his works. It is only to be regretted that his observations on this subject lie detached, instead of being placed together in one view, as they thus lose a great part of their effect. In consequence likewise of treating the subject in this manner, its connection with the faculties of the mind (which forms a first and principal object in our estimation, when we survey it as a proportioned whole) falls not particularly under observation.

each other, yet are required to exert united influence in every species of this art, when properly conducted. Of this we shall judge with more precision from a general consideration of their different offices.

“ The understanding is that power of the mind which determines the relation of parts to each other in laying down the plan of a performance of whatever nature ; which judgeth of its comprehension as suited to the subject ; which, following the

servation. In his first book *De Oratore*, and twelfth chapter, he gives a definition of the term with considerable extent, distinguisheth betwixt the expression and sentiment ; and separates with great propriety and discernment the provinces of philosophy and eloquence from each other. Thus much for the sentiments of the Ancients on the meaning of this term. We would swell out this note to too much length by considering the accounts of it given by modern writers, which differ in nothing materially from the preceding ones, at least as far as the author can judge from his acquaintance with their works. The opinions of some of the most eminent on this subject we shall have occasion to adduce, and to examine likewise at large in different sections of the following essay.

series

series of effects to their original, investigates a cause; and superintends the conduct of this procedure in such a manner as to make the expression bear the same relation to the sentiments of any performance which these last are required to do to each other."

—"Imagination, or the inventive faculty, as it is denominated, is that which strikes out happy imitations, forms new and original assemblages of ideas; and thus supplies the materials of those just and beautiful illustrations, which at the same time improve the expression of composition, and heighten the effect of its sentiment." — "By discernment we understand that faculty which, without carrying on any regular process, comprehends as it were instantaneously the proper manner of treating any subject, by fixing upon the points that are of principal consequence, and accomplisheth by this mean, at once, purposes which the understanding alone *cannot* effectuate in *some cases* by any exertion; and obtains in those to which it is adapted, by a slow and deliberate procedure." This power appears to participate of both the former, but

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is constituted wholly by neither. From judgment, considered by itself, it differs remarkably in quickness of perception at all times universally, and even upon some occasions, in its choice of objects. From imagination it is no less distinguished by making *a just* instead of a *superficial* or *indiscriminate selection of means*; and by going to the bottom of a subject, instead of skinning lightly on its surface. Discernment, thus including a part of the offices both of judgment and imagination, we shall find to act in different departments, according to the proportion in which either of these faculties is conferred on an individual. Thus when a large share of the inventive is united with a much greater proportion of the reasoning power, to which last therefore it is wholly subservient, the intellectual eye, though taking cognizance in general of all objects, will be conspicuous principally, either in conducting, or in judging of that disquisition which is directed by the understanding. It judgeth for instance in this case of the force and propriety of an argument, whose connection

nection with the subject might wholly escape the observation of a less intelligent mind. It brings together proofs from every quarter, to support and confirm an hypothesis framed originally by an act that indicates the most acute perception; and hits (to use the language of an eminent writer) upon that *particular point* on which the *bent* of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends *." Thus it is, that philosophical discernment is peculiarly constituted, and becomes conspicuous, either in the sphere of composition, when a subject is methodised and discussed,

* Pope's preface to Shakespeare. Our author ascribes this conduct of the great Genius whom he characteriseth, to a talent different from that of judgment; something he says, "*very peculiar, and betwixt penetration and felicity.*" I do not understand the meaning of these last words very clearly. Shakespeare possessed in an eminent degree the discernment that ariseth from judgment and imagination acting in vigorous concurrence, and it is one of the criteria of this power (as we shall show particularly in its proper place) to produce this happy but uncommon effect, which could not escape the observation of a writer who himself possessed so large a proportion of intellectual acumen.

or in forming an estimate of the execution when submitted to critical investigation.

A proportion of the inventive faculty more adequate to that of the reasoning power, (each supposed to exist in an eminent degree) renders the influence of discernment still more conspicuous than in the former instance, because it appears with *equal* advantage in this case, when judging of the *arts*, as well as of the investigations of science; and will pronounce as properly of what is *beautiful* in the one, as of what is *just* and decisive in the other. The means by which both is effectuated we shall consider more particularly, when we come to treat of this as a *distinct* faculty, operating universally on the various branches of composition.

We have in the preceding observations considered the intellectual powers only as influencing the various species of the subject of this essay.—But there are two questions arising from our account of these which must be answered before we acquire a clear idea of *composition as it regards the faculties of the mind*. Is (it may be asked)
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the concurrence of those we have enumerated necessary to give mastery to an author's execution in any department of this comprehensive art?—We may reply without hesitation, that though the degrees in which this union may take place vary according to the nature of a subject, yet the combination in some degree is necessary for this purpose. But should it again be asked, whether a talent for any species of composition, or a power of placing thoughts in the happiest disposition, and of expressing them in the fittest words; whether this talent always accompanies the union of intellectual qualities abovementioned, even when subsisting in a high degree; we shall find upon enquiry, that there is no necessary connection betwixt these, as the former may subsist, when there is no peculiar bias to the latter.

1. It is usually thought that wherever a vigorous imagination exerts its influence, the mind commonly receives a propensity to composition; and that the highest walks of this art are *always* occupied by those who possess an eminent proportion of it.

Authors

Authors in general have not contradicted the prevailing opinion with regard to the connection betwixt this mental quality and the subject of which we treat. But a little reflection will show us that we are mistaken in this estimation.

Upon surveying attentively the mental powers by which man is distinguished from the inferior creation, we shall find each of these assuming forms so various as it operates on particular characters, that, without bestowing close attention, we may overlook the cause from which effects seemingly so remote from each other derive their origin. Thus a mechanical engine, an animated figure in history painting, a philosophical theory, and a series of interesting and well concerted incidents, appear at first view to be objects whose connection is so distant, that it demands attention to discover that the inventive faculty, assuming different aspects, is the common parent of all. The difficulty of tracing to their original source the phenomena that arise from imagination, is still greater, when we consider its influence on the
actions

actions of men. Thus among the active part of mankind, who are commonly supposed to possess no great share of this faculty, because perhaps they are incapable either of discovering, or of feeling the beauties of composition; we are apt to overlook or not to assign to its proper cause, the facility with which these men invent plans of happiness adapted to their dispositions, one after a former hath been disappointed; the uncommon expedients they sometimes adopt to carry these into execution; in short, their capacity of finding such remote and extraordinary resources as render the most formidable dangers not only surmountable, but even familiar: yet it is unquestionably the same power receiving only a different direction, which produceth these effects in life as it is that in the spheres of poetry and eloquence invents the fable, or supplies the illustrations.

It is not however only from the actions of men that we may be led to consider the busy part of them as possessing in many instances no inconsiderable share of imagination. A little acquaintance with life

will set before us another class upon whose *conversation* this faculty appears to operate in a very striking manner, though without extending any further. These are men who inheriting from nature a certain quickness and volatility of thought, which evaporates in an instant, are qualified to sparkle a moment in the circle of their companions. But the talent of methodising sentiment, and that of throwing out loose thoughts, however entertaining, are wholly different. The first is the offspring of fancy deriving little assistance from the reasoning power; whereas the last is effectuated by an effort indicating mature and deliberate recollection. Thus it happens that men wholly disqualified for the one of these employments, assume the other as a province in which nature hath fully compensated the defect.

As imagination itself is thus susceptible of such different appearances, so the understanding, consistent and uniform as its operations usually are, participates likewise, in consequence of its union with the former, of this variety of character. Thus
judgment

judgment united with that invention which carries a man through the busy scenes of life, derives from this power an expression so different from that which distinguisheth it in composition, as not to be marked without close attention from its effects*. Its employments are indeed so distinct from each other in these cases, that the same intellectual faculty which judgeth of the most effectual expedients in the various occurrences of life; weighing the force of an argument; or estimating the propriety of an illustration, appears in aspects seemingly incongruous, and is seldom or never

* Thus one of the greatest masters of reason assigns to this faculty two distinct offices, that of laying down plans of action; and that of contemplating abstracted ideas with steadiness and comprehension. *Και τὸ φανερόν ομοίως ἐν τῇ τοῖς κατὰ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ, καὶ τοῖς κατὰ ΦΥΣΙΝ. βελτίον δὲ τὸ λόγον ἔχον διηρηται: τὴ διχῇ καθ' οὐπερ εἰωθαμεν τροποῦ διαίρειν. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΟΣ ἐστὶ λόγος, ὁ δὲ ΘΕΩΡΗΤΙΚΟΣ. Ὡσαύτως οὐκ ἀναγκη, &c. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. ΠΟΛΙΤ. Η.* With the same latitude another ancient philosopher considers this faculty as *ΕΝΝΟΙΑ ΦΥΣΙΚΗ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΘΟΛΟΥ. ΧΡΥΣΙΠ.* apud ΔΙΟΓΕΝ. ΛΑΕΡΤ. ΖΕΝ. βιβ. ζ'.

able to act in both capacities with an equal degree of accuracy*.

That mental power which when exerted either in executing, or in judging of execution in the fields of composition takes the designation of discernment; in common life is known by that of *sagacity*. In the last it is distinguished by a perception of the real character, and an *insight* (if we may thus term it) into the secret motives that influence conduct, no less justly than instantaneously conceived, from circumstances that escape a common observer. Its effect in the first instance we

* It is probably on account of this inability that we find those who possessed the greatest share of reason, so pathetically lamenting its weakness. I mention here a passage of Cicero preserved by St. Austin not only on account of its analogy to the present subject; but as it is expressed with peculiar elegance and propriety. "Homo (says he) non ut a *Matre*, sed ut a *Noverca Natura* editus est in vitam, corpore nudo, fragili, & infirmo: animo autem anxio ad molestias, humili ad timores, molli ad labores, prono ad libidines: in quo tamen ineffet tanquam OBRUTUS quidam DIVINUS IGNIS INGENII & MENTIS. Patricii Fragment. Cicer. have

have formerly pointed out. Perhaps it may be said with truth, that the same qualities which form a penetrating judge of composition, would form likewise the *sagacious* observer of manners and action, and always does so when accompanied with experience. But whatever truth may be in this, the reverse surely does not hold, that he who is acknowledged to show *sagacity* in the one case, possesseth always *discernment* in the other. This is so evident as to stand in need of no confirmation.

From these observations on the human mind it will follow, that the talent above-mentioned of placing thoughts in the happiest order, and of clothing them in the fittest words, accompanies not necessarily the possession of the highest intellectual qualities whether acting separately or in union with each other. Imagination we have seen distinguisheth the *mechanic* as well as the *poet*, and judgment is shared in common by the philosopher and the man of business. Both faculties indeed we have seen to be combined in this last instance; and yet the person distinguished by their

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combination,

combination, not only unable to acquire excellence in, but even to conceive ideas of masterly composition.—To reply to these facts, that excellence in the art of which we treat, depends not upon the possession of the principal powers, but upon the degrees in which they subsist, will be found upon examination to be dissatisfactory. Admitting the truth of this assertion it can answer no purpose, unless we mean to affirm that the share of reason and imagination required to constitute a talent for composition, is *necessarily* and *essentially* superior to that portion of these which forms an ingenious mechanic, or a man of abilities in the transactions of life. This, however, reflection will lead us to reject as contrary in many instances to the dictates both of reason and experience.

The first inventor of any complicated piece of machinery, (a clock, or a watch, for instance) in whose construction many inferior and regulated movements concur to accomplish the design of the artist, must be considered as having received from nature in an high degree not only the faculty
of

of invention, but that likewise which judgeth with acuteness and penetration. The extent of the former appears from his conception of so original a work; the depth and subtlety of the latter, from an exquisitely nice arrangement of parts; and the mutual dependence subsisting through the whole. In the same manner, the man who is interested in the business of life, and is able to make various and remote expedients terminate in the accomplishment of some purpose of importance, cannot upon many occasions be denied his claim to a very uncommon share of both these qualities without injustice; the one being remarkably conspicuous in the invention of such expedients; the other in their application to particular purposes. Thus, will it be denied that a general entrusted with supreme authority, whose mind is fruitful of resources, and who by the happy means that occur to him, extricates himself with honour when placed in the most critical and perilous circumstances; will it be denied that such a man displays consummate genius, i. e. (supposing this character to de-

pend principally upon imagination) great *invention* in the military art?—Admitting this to be true, must we not allow him likewise to discover discernment in the truest sense of that word, when we observe that he hath foreseen and superseded the designs of his rival, that his stratagems have not only displayed imagination in their contrivance, but the greatest address in being carried into execution? Can we in the last place deny his claim to extensive understanding, when we find that his whole conduct hath in general been regulated by those maxims that most commonly influence the discreet and the prudent*?

Should

* The reader who would see these observations exemplified, will find a variety of instances to his purpose in perusing the history of Sertorius opposed alternately to the best Roman generals; in the detail of Hannibal's exploits while he maintained himself in Italy; in the conduct of Cæsar, (who wrote indeed almost as well as he fought) particularly after the battle of Dyrrachium. In more modern times he will meet with wonderful proofs of this military genius carried to its utmost extent in the history of Condé and Turenne, when opposed to each other; in the last campaign of the latter when

Should it again be replied, that however extensive we may allow imagination sometimes to be in the cases abovementioned, yet this faculty when employed at least in the higher species of composition, dwelling on *sublime* and *abstracted* objects, and forming as it were a new creation of its own, must be originally of a *more exalted cast* (if we may thus express it) in a mind directed to such pursuits, than when it re-

when he appeared as a competitor for glory with Montecuculi ; in the first Italian campaigns of Eugene, and as an instance adequate to any of the former ; in the last proof exhibited by Marlborough of his consummate abilities, when he commanded against Villars at the siege of Bouchaine.—It will be observed that we have only selected examples here of celebrated leaders acting in opposition to each other. A man of knowledge and experience in the art of war may obtain a series of easy victories over a weak or inexperienced antagonist. But to triumph in the midst of danger and difficulty by the natural resources of a copious invention is the province of genius alone. We have likewise upon this occasion considered only excellence in the military profession. The discerning reader may apply what hath been said on this subject to men who act in other spheres of life, in which he may be assisted by the preceding observations.

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ceives any other bias of what kind soever; we would observe, that this objection refers not to the *degree* in which invention subsists, but to the particular subjects to which it discovers a propensity. These however are objects wholly distinct from each other. He who raiseth a mass of iron from the earth, possesseth it is evident *the same degree* of natural strength with him who bears a quantity of gold or diamonds precisely equal in weight to the former. The disparity lies therefore not in the strength of the two men, but in the objects to which it is directed, Swift and Butler were neither of them geniuses of a very exalted class. Yet it will not we presume be denied that the former in his Tale of a Tub, and in the Travels of Gulliver, the latter in his inimitable Hudibras, discover copious, fruitful, and even original imagination. But without estimating the comparative value of different objects, it is sufficient for us to observe at present, that the mind of that person who presides over a great people and conducts the complicated machine of government with abilities

lities adequate to the office*; that the intellectual powers of that commander who

* Quintilian, solicitous of drawing almost every human excellence within the vortex of eloquence, will not give up the character mentioned in the text to the claim of philosophy. He contends that such a man ought likewise to be esteemed an orator. His words are remarkable.—“*Neque enim hoc concesserim, rationem rectæ, honestæque vitæ ad Philosophos relegendam; cum vir ille vere civilis, & publicarum privatarumque rerum administrationi accommodatus; qui regere conciliis urbes, fundare legibus, emendare judiciis possit; non aliter sit profecto quam orator. Quare tametsi me fateor usurum quibusdam quæ Philosophorum libris continentur tamen ea jure, vereque contenderim esse operis nostri, propriæque ad Artem Oratoriam pertinere.*” The truth of this observation depends in a great measure upon the sense in which we understand the word Orator. If we understand by this term a power of speaking in such a manner as to obtain the purposes of convincing, pleasing and moving the passions, it is certain that the possession of the first of these qualifies men principally to give laws to society; and that it hath distinguished persons who shared not at least in any eminent degree of the last. Such men therefore could not with propriety be denominated *eloquent*, at least according to Cicero’s definition of the word. “*Erit Eloquentis is qui ita dicit, ut probet, ut delectet, ut flectat. Probare necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriæ.*”

lays down the transactions of a future year, and in the prosecution of his plan, accommodates himself to difficult, perplexing, and unexpected obstructions; that these are fitted by nature to form great ideas, and whether endowed or not with a talent for composition, possess an eminent share of the powers that give rise to its operating in an enlarged and comprehensive direction.

We have now evinced from a series of observation on the characters of men, that the art of which we here treat, considered as regarding the faculties of the mind, neither accompanies necessarily the possession of any of these viewed separately; or even ariseth from the degree in which they are conferred when acting in combination. —“What then, it may be asked, is Composition in the present important view of that art, and by what circumstance is it constituted?”—We reply.—“A talent for Composition is formed by a share of those intellectual powers we have described, varied indeed in proportion to the value of that species to which the mind hath received

ceived a bias; but accompanied in every case with a propensity to place such ideas as occur to it in lights at the same time happy and diversified, to range these in just and perspicuous disposition; to express them in suitable words which are selected with facility; and to give the whole so permanent a form by committing it to writing, as that the mind may contemplate it with pleasure upon a review." It is not therefore from the proportion of mental qualities conferred on any man, that we are to judge of the degree in which he possesseth a talent for the art in question, or even of its existence *. The *bias* which these

* When we speak of a talent for composition (as that term hath been defined) we must take care to exclude from this idea, that slight propensity to a superficial kind of writing which some men discover, in which the thoughts are at the same time conceived with quickness, and throw it into language with facility. This happens when trite subjects fall to be discussed by minds that are either disqualified by nature to take any comprehensive view of things, or when indolence, encouraged by a defective education, prevents a man possessed of talents from putting these to their

these receive from nature is the circumstance particularly to be attended to in forming this estimation. The usual indications of this extraordinary propensity, and the manner of cultivating it most successfully, whatever direction it may have received, will be considered, when we come to treat of the most proper method of bringing the intellectual powers, when distinguished by this bias, as nearly as possible to a just equipoise.

2. Having thus taken a view of Composition as connected in general with the faculties of the mind, we are next to consider what is implied in it when viewed as an art distinguished by particular characters, consisting of various species, and contributing eminently to promote the happiness and civilization of mankind.

their proper use. In this last case, these, in consequence of having early received a different direction from that in which they might have appeared to the highest advantage, become at last unfit to fix in it with such steadiness as is necessary to the accomplishment of any valuable purpose.

In order to acquire a just idea of our subject in these points of view, we must here make one general observation on the qualities that most commonly go along with this uncommon and valuable propensity. It is, that *deliberate* recollection, and a *gradual* rather than *rapid* succession of ideas are criteria that in all cases whatever characterise the minds that are thus particularly distinguished by nature. A little attention to the subject will enable us to judge of the truth of this observation, (paradoxical as it may at first appear to be) and to obviate the objections that will naturally be made to it.

Diversified as the subjects of Composition certainly are, we must yet be convinced upon reflection, that there is no species of the art in which disposition or a certain orderly arrangement of parts is not essentially necessary. In some branches of it indeed this arrangement is no doubt much more conspicuously useful than in others; when an Author, for example, must descend from the general view of a subject to contemplate the particular parts of which it consists;

or

or when some leading sentiment is to be shown in different lights, and to be illustrated by a series of connected observations. But so indispensable is this requisition, that the perfection of those performances which are deemed the loosest and most detached, lies not in the want of methodical accuracy, but in the artful concealment of a regular disposition, by which means the entertainment arising from certain graces thrown into a piece with apparent negligence, and the information derived from a well conducted process, are happily united.

In order to render the disposition of objects accurate, it is necessary that the mind should possess a power of contemplating each of these steadily by itself, that it may at the same time be fully exhibited, and may occupy the place that most naturally belongs to it. But this purpose can at no time be effectuated when there is a rapid succession of ideas taking place in the mind. The understanding (which is the parent of this disposition) must curb even the most excentric imagination with so strong a
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rein, as to fix it to one place as long as may be expedient; and to prescribe to it certain boundaries, within which its range must at all times be limited *. Thus therefore it happens that what appears to have been owing to a sudden effusion, comes to be seen as arising from cool recollection; and a faculty to have directed the conduct of some procedure in which we might be apt at first view to judge that its operation would be in a great measure suspended †.

* The Author last quoted, gives his sanction to this opinion. Thus he not only adviseth the orator to be cautious and deliberate in his composition; but to prove that these ingredients constitute a bias for the art in general, he adduceth the examples of Sallust and Virgil. “*Sic scripsisse Sallustium accepimus, & sane manifestus est ex opere ipso labor. Virgilium quoque paucissimos die composuisse versus auctor est Varus. Oratoris alia conditio est. Itaque hanc moram & sollicitudinem in initiis impero.*” Instit. Orator. lib. x. cap. 3. Describing afterwards the manner in which Composition is carried on, he says, “*Paulatim res facilius se ostendent, verba respondebunt, Compositio sequetur, cuncta denique ut in familia bene instituta, in officio erunt.*” Id.

† See this point more fully explained, Section II.

These observations when followed properly out, will enable us to comprehend the cause of a phænomenon formerly taken notice of;—that in many instances imagination exerts remarkable influence on the *conversation* of men, who are disqualified to exercise it in any branch of Composition *. The *fallies* of wit, the *quickness* of repartee, the power of comprehending a *distant* hint; and of expressing with facility ideas that arise instantaneously in the mind, indicate (as we formerly observed) a certain *volatility* of thought that is lost in an instant*; but which constitutes the character of an agreeable companion, and fits the person, whom it distinguisheth, peculiarly for social life. But, in the art of which we treat, we have endeavoured to show that qualities wholly different from these must be exerted in order to characterise a good writer. When the man therefore in whom they are acknowledged to subsist, attempts to range his thoughts at leisure, and to combine a series of objects so

* Page 13.

justly as that each may throw some light upon another, in a comprehensive detail; the *heat and freedom* with which he thinks upon other occasions, renders him then unfit to form *an adequate estimate*; and the *rapid succession of his ideas to express with perspicuity* that which may occur to him. He on the other hand, who with an animated and vigorous imagination, is qualified to select at leisure from the variety of objects such as are most apposite, and calculated from the *order* in which they are placed to promote his general purpose, must it is obvious, in order to excel equally in both characters, be able to think at one time with promptitude, and even precipitance; and at another with deliberate recollection; or his excellence confined to this last sphere, will cease to be conspicuous in the other.

It will, we are here aware, be immediately said, that however necessary this gradual succession of ideas may be to excellence in some species of Composition, it must be limited to the two branches of philosophy and history. But with regard

to others, (particularly the poetic art) rapid transitions, and apostrophes seemingly unconnected, not only produce the strongest effect, but even the appearance of these is necessary to perfect the execution. Thus where it will be asked would be the beauty of the ODE, (that high and enchanting species of poetic composition) if we should deprive it of those animated fallies, those abrupt and daring flights of genius, which arise from an imagination intensely agitated, and starting with little apparent connection from one object to another *? The same

* From such views as these it probably was that some of the ancients were led to consider poetry in general as a kind of enthusiastic effusion arising from a divine and irresistible impulse; and the POET inspired by his MUSE, like the sibyl on her tripod, throwing out dark mysterious, and prophetic exhibitions. Thus even in later ages among the Romans, the word VATES signified equally a poet, and a prophet. Strabo considers poetic enthusiasm as a kind of divine inspiration resembling the prophetic. Εὐθεσιασμος επενευσιν τινα δειαν εχειν δοκει, και ΤΩ ΜΑΝΤΙΚΩ γειναι πλεσιαζειν. βιβ. I. Plato in the same manner sets out in his beautiful dialogue on this subject by calling poetry ΕΝΘΕΙΑ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ;

same question may be applied with some variation to every other species of the art, the didactic alone excepted.

But before we pronounce a decision on this subject, let us endeavour to distin-

ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ, an inspired energy, and goes so far as to affirm *ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτοὺς ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων*, that God himself is the speaker in their compositions. ΠΛΑΤ. ΙΩ. Again he tells us, as the result of his observations on this subject, *Εἰδὼ οὖν αὐ καὶ περὶ ποιητῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τούτῳ, ὅτι οὐ σοφία ποιοῖεν αὐ ποιοῖεν, ἀλλὰ φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνοθυσιαζόντες ὥσπερ οἱ θεομαντεῖς καὶ χρησμῶδοι*. ΑΠΟΛΟΓ. ΣΟΚΡ. κεφ. Ζ. Aristotle and the elegant writers of the Augustan age speak much more rationally and philosophically on this subject. The reader who chooseth to enquire into their sentiments, may consult particularly the first and tenth chapter of the Poetics of the former, and the writings of Cicero throughout. Admitting however the definition of Plato to be just and appropriated, it will no more follow, that a man whose powers are absorbed in the contemplation of abstracted objects, should on *that account* be disqualified to survey these separately with attention, and to dispose of each in the best manner, than that his eye when beholding an agreeable and diversified landscape, should be always disqualified to take cognizance of particular beauties or defects.

guish, on every occasion, betwixt the strength of that impression which one object makes upon a great imagination, and a series of these passing before it perhaps in quick but superficial review. Keeping this necessary distinction in our eye, we shall find that even in those poetic productions in which we meet with the boldest turns, and the most unexpected transitions, the genius of the POET appears in the significance that he gives to particular lineaments of his portrait; in the colour that he throws upon the most striking and distinguished features; in the selection of appropriated images; and in the attitude and disposition of every separate figure of the piece, a work that requires him to dwell with attention on the ideas that pass successively in review before his mind to whatever degree of fervid contemplation it may be wrought up*.

In

* This assertion may require to be exemplified — Let us take an example from one of the most seemingly irregular productions of the bard, whom *impetuous*

In the most perfect productions of genius, both ancient and modern, the discern-
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petuous imagination most eminently distinguisheth. It is his third Olympic addressed to Theron of Agrigentum. Upon a superficial view of this ode, nothing is conspicuous to the reader, but an enthusiastic bard addressing Castor, Pollux, and Helena (deities who have no concern in the games of Greece) instead of invoking Jupiter, Minerva, or Apollo; or beginning with the praises of the hero whom he professed to celebrate. With no apparent connection he drags Hercules into the ode a little after, and transports his reader in an instant from the plain of Olympus to the Utopian clime of Hyperborca. Having informed us that Hercules transplanted an olive from this country to Greece, that the Olympic victors might be crowned with it, he takes occasion to pay a compliment to Theron with which the ode concludes.—Such is the first appearance of this piece in which a number of heterogeneous ideas seem to have poured upon the mind of the poet, and to have been jumbled together without coherence. But when we come to observe, that by representing as *sacred* every circumstance relating to these games, the highest honour was reflected upon the conqueror, who was thus supposed to be the peculiar favourite of the gods; when we are informed that Castor and Pollux were supposed to have been appointed by Hercules the guardians and patrons of the *consecrated olive*; when we advert likewise that being transplanted from a

ing reader will find this capacity of cool recollection, those criteria that indicate a gradual succession of ideas in the thoughts of the writer distinguishing his performance upon every occasion. Thus we ob-

country whose inhabitants were thought to enjoy *perfect felicity*, the happiness of Theron is more strongly set before us, by having this symbol of pleasure wreathed around his head, than by the most studied description:—when we attend to these circumstances, we are led to admire the address of the poet in the conduct of his subject; the artful and even judicious selection of his topics, and the *arrangement* obvious in the *whole piece*. It were easy to show likewise that the imagination of Pindar, impetuous as it is, yet dwells with steadiness upon particular objects; and that he discovers at the same time vivacity and precision in the conception, the colouring, and the disposition of his figures. In the very ode that we have selected on this occasion; observe the beautiful and finished picture which he sets before the reader, of the moon shining on the altar of Jupiter, at the time when this olive was conferred on the conqueror.

ἦδε γὰρ αὐτῷ

πατρὶ μὲν βοῶν ἁγισθίν-

των διχομήνης ὅλον χρυσαρματος

ἰσπερας ὀφθαλμοῖν ἀντεφλέξε μῆνα.

ΠΙΝΔ. ΟΛΥΜΠ. Γ.

serve

serve Homer, like a consummate general overlooking the battle from an eminence, maintaining a majestic and uniform composure in the midst of tumult and universal commotion. He describes particularly the ground upon which the armies engaged; carries the reader's eye successively from one scene to another, as they may be supposed to have changed their situation: he drops one hero sometimes in the most interesting part of the action, that he may introduce another, whose different manners give an entertaining variety to the poem, and to the display of whose peculiar character the circumstances are happily adapted. In short, when a *crisis* is brought on in the action, we find this great genius pausing in the midst of his career to render by sublime and appropriated imagery every circumstance relating to the combatants, a successive object of admiration. Thus the helmet, the plumage, the shield, the buckler, and the very point of the spear of Achilles are called in to heighten the description of that exalted sphere in which this hero constantly moves. This conduct

duct is wholly different from that which a man would have pursued, whose ideas poured in with haste and rapidity. Such a man, had he attended to *all* the circumstances which Homer hath displayed to such advantage, would have passed each of these over as quickly as possible, in order to arrive at the principal event. Embarrassed with the variety of his materials, his work would consist rather of brilliant strokes scattered profusely throughout, than of proportioned figures completely exhibited. In short, whatever species of Composition we may suppose a man of this character to attempt, his ideas must be loose and disjointed, his expression obscure and inaccurate, though selected with much difficulty; and unable to support either the majesty of description, or the series of argument, every part of his performance would be left uncompleted.

From the whole therefore it is we presume obvious, that imagination, however naturally irregular, must be able to *contemplate with attention* the figures that compose

compose a whole piece; and an Author of whatever denomination, to adjust the members of his work with coolness and recollection, otherwise he will be unequal to the task of exhibiting each (at least in Composition) with grace, proportion, and energy.

We have, in the course of our observations on this subject, taken our examples principally from one of the highest species of poetry, because it is *here*, that the qualities we have mentioned as accompanying a propensity to the art of which we treat in this work, are judged to be unnecessary, if they can be so in any case whatever. Having thus therefore shown their influence and importance in this sphere, we have much easier work with the others; in which an ultimate end is *obviously* kept in view, while we follow the writer through a methodised enquiry; and attend to the operation of each intellectual power, as well as to the effect arising from their general combination. Philosophy, history, eloquence, and criticism, considered in this point of view, will amply confirm the pre-

ceding observations; from which at present we may define Composition, when viewed as consisting of diversified characters, and distinguished into various species; to be “that ART by which the several parts of a subject are so justly fitted to each other, as to form a *proportioned* and *beautiful whole*.”—Of the manner in which this end is accomplished, of the office assigned to each faculty, as well as of the *united* power of all in bringing it about, we now proceed to treat more particularly.

S E C T I O N II.

Of the Province of the Understanding in Composition.

AMONG the faculties of the mind, that by which man is chiefly distinguished from all inferior creatures, forms in the present, as in every similar investigation, the great and primary object of attention. The offices therefore of the understanding, as these have already been explained

explained in general, we shall now consider particularly as far as the present subject is concerned, according to the method formerly laid down *.

The criteria from which the judgment of a writer is rendered principally conspicuous, are the discovery of a theory or hypothesis; the disposition of parts in the plan of a work in such order as most effectually promotes an ultimate purpose; the comprehension of this plan as adapted fully to the subject of whatever kind; and finally a certain propriety of sentiments and of illustration, which universally indicates the prevalence of this faculty, and may therefore be regarded as a perpetual designation of it.—On each of these heads, considered by itself, we shall throw together some observations.

1. Upon a first view it may appear somewhat extraordinary to aver that any eminent share of *reason* is indicated by the *discovery* of an hypothesis, as invention of every kind is usually ascribed to imagina-

* Section I. page 7.

tion, which is on that account denominated, by way of eminence, the inventive faculty. The propriety with which this term is applied to it we shall have occasion to examine in the subsequent section. It is of importance to the present subject to observe, that two distinct kinds of invention will be found to take place in the different branches of Composition, and to characterise the persons who excel in it. The first of these is distinguished by an assemblage of original ideas brought together without much recollection; by the peculiar and happy lights that are thrown upon truths already known, either in consequence of a well adapted expression, or the application of new and uncommon illustrations; by the unbeaten paths into which an Author falls; and by the sudden *flashes of light* (if we may thus express it) which he casts around him. In these offices it is obvious that imagination is *principally* employed, which never fails to excite when obviously predominant, a desire of deviating upon *every occasion* from the received opinions of mankind.

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The other kind of invention is constituted by the intense and steady effort of understanding, which estimating the comparative strength of arguments, and advancing from simpler to more compounded exhibitions in its research, deduceth at last some conclusion from principles formerly known, which may at the same time be *new*, and established upon the justest foundation. A process of this nature is directed principally, if not wholly by the judgment of the writer: it is completed by patience and assiduity; qualities that are particularly characteristical of the prevalence of this faculty, whose exertion either enables a man to strike out some truth that had been formerly undiscovered, or to build a new system from the light in which he placeth received maxims.

When we mention the placing common sentiments in a new point of view as a species of invention sometimes arising from judgment, and sometimes principally from imagination, we are not to suppose that it will be a matter of much difficulty to distinguish the cause from which this effect is

is derived in particular instances. We have already afforded a criterion sufficient to determine this matter when it was observed, that when a work is characterised by the prevalence of imagination, even where no *original* sentiment is displayed, yet some peculiar energy will distinguish the expression; or some striking and uncommon illustrations will give strength and energy to the thoughts*. Reason on the contrary never aims at merit of this kind. Considered by itself, what Addison says of the soul when viewed abstractedly from its passions, may be applied with great propriety to this faculty of it. "It is slow in its resolves, and equally delibe-

* A modern critic sets this matter in so just a light by the use of a beautiful and appropriated image, that the reader of taste will peruse it with pleasure. Speaking of the difficulty of entering into characters he says—"Quare sapienter Plato ut lavaret hoc onere philosophos præcepit, ut in *summa* rerum consisterent, ad *singula* ne descenderent. Nempe *suprema* & *propinqua* *cælo* *aeris* *pars* a turbis libera est: non cogitur illa in nubem, non in tempestatem propellitur, non versatur in turbinem. *Inferior* tonat ac fulminat." Prolus: prima."

rate in its execution. It requires therefore often to be awakened by the passions, that the man may be vigorous and attentive in the prosecution of his designs *.”

To this cautious procedure it is owing, that a discovery effectuated by the understanding is always confirmed by clearer as well as more satisfying evidence, than that in which another power of the mind proposeth the end, and reason is compelled to supply the most probable means of bringing it about †. In this last case the power above mentioned is straitened in every exertion; and we discover with very little attention, that circumstances are brought together to support an untenable proposition, which necessarily fail in the accomplishment of their purpose. But in the other instance, when judgment at the same time proposeth a certain end, and conducts the series of observation or of argument that

* Spectator, Vol. iv. No. 255.

† “Cum sit posita (ratio) in inventione nec elocutionis ornamenta magnopere desideret, aut circa memoriam & pronunciationem laboret.” Quintil. lib. vi. cap. 5.

leads to its attainment, the tendency of each of these to promote this purpose is at once conspicuous; and all, when taken together, naturally coalesce in that point in which they ought to concentrate. Thus the whimsical theory of Malebranche *, and that of our ingenious countryman Burnet †, though relating to subjects wholly distinct from each other, yet equally embarrass their authors, though far from being deficient in clearness of intellectual perception; and lead them either into the highest refinements of metaphysical investigation ‡, as in the first instance, or into

* De la Recherche de la Verité.

† See his celebrated work entitled *Sacra Theoria Telluris*.

‡ The great doctrine inculcated in this extraordinary work is, that spirits living in the divine mind, in the same manner as bodies occupy space, all things are seen by these as existing originally in the deity. Recherche liv. iii. part 1. This strange hypothesis has led our author into many absurd, though ingenious disquisitions, which it is not our business to examine here. The principal of these (particularly his idea of an *infinite Reason*) the judicious Locke hath exposed and refuted with great precision and strength of argument. See the Examination of Malebranche, in his Works.

forced constructions of passages tortured from their obvious signification, as in the last *. The reason of this embarrassment in both is, that the ultimate purpose of each work is that which imagination, not reason, originally suggested. But having been once adopted, this faculty is called in as an assistant to support positions which it would perhaps have rejected. Still however we observe its strength; but it is strength misapplied. Like Samson when deprived of sight, it retains its vigour, but employs it not to rear a fabric but to put such materials together as may be thrown down.—Let the reader of discernment compare either of these with the excellent work entitled the *Analogy betwixt Natural and Revealed Religion*, in which the understanding pursues a certain purpose thro'

* It is not our present business to enter into the proof of this observation. The reader who considers the manner in which this most ingenious writer hath managed the proofs of his theory that are drawn from Scripture, will observe the plausible appearance which he gives to an interpretation of passages that will not bear to be closely examined.

a series of rational and satisfactory evidences; and he will perceive the easy process by which this faculty obtaineth its end when permitted to operate *universally as a principal*, instead of the *constraint* and *obscurity* that mark its progress, when employed to support hypotheses which it did not form.

It ought likewise to be observed on this head, that when it is an author's purpose either to discover or to elucidate truth by an accurate enumeration of principles and inferences, the mind must advance in its work with the utmost circumspection, as in the scale of arguments corroborating each other, the defect or weakness of *one step* is sufficient to marr the effect of all. Disproportion of parts is indeed much more conspicuous in such a work, than in composition embellished with metaphor and imagery. In this last case we are willing to suppose that an author hath protracted his examination of a favourite topic, and hath strained a particular branch of his work beyond its due dimensions, from the natural and irresistible impulse of a warm imagination.

imagination. But in the other, as the reader receives less entertainment from the external decorations, he is at leisure to examine attentively the proportions of the figure, and is struck with a defect in this circumstance that might have otherwise escaped the most accurate observer. An understanding adequate to its subject, and unimpelled by other powers that marr its operations, by keeping one ultimate aim closely in sight; and by setting in a clear light every step by which we approach to it, seldom permits this fault to become so obvious as to give offence even to those, whose powers of discernment enable them to decide on this point with the greatest precision.

Upon the whole, the requisition principally necessary to carry on the discovery of unknown truth, is an understanding unembarrassed in its pursuit by another power, and adopting the idioms of imagination only to elucidate its principles*,
instead

* Two celebrated ancients, Aristotle and Quintilian, seem to think very differently of the propriety

instead of being admitted to evince the genius of the writer, while they throw an air of obscurity over his performance.

with which metaphors ought to be introduced, and of their use in Composition. The former (perhaps somewhat too hastily) condemns these altogether as productive universally of obscurity, and will not allow even images, which he distinguisheth from the other, to be introduced, when these have a tincture of poetry. The latter points out their use and expedience with great accuracy. Ἄλλος εἰ (says the Greek philosopher) καὶ Μεταφορὰν εἰρηκεν, οἷον εἰ τὴν ἐπιστῆμην ἀμεταπτῶτον, &c. ΠΑΝΤΑ γὰρ ἈΣΑΦΕΣ τὸ καλὰ ΜΕΤΑΦΟΡΑΝ ΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΟΝ. ΤΟΠΙΚ. βιβ. ζ. In another place he says, Ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ ἡ Εἰκὼν Μεταφορὰ. Διαφέρει γὰρ μικρὸν. Ὅταν γὰρ εἴπῃ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως—Ὡς δὲ Λεῶν ἐπορεύσεν.—Εἰκὼν ἐστίν. Ὅταν δὲ Λεῶν ἐπορεύσῃ, ΜΕΤΑΦΟΡΑ. Διὰ γὰρ τὸ ἀμφω ἀνδρείους εἶναι, προσηγορεύσῃ μετενεγκὰς Λεόντα τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως. Χρησιμὸν δὲ Εἰκὼν καὶ ἐν λόγῳ. ΟΛΙΓΑΚΙΣ δὲ, ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΟΝ γὰρ. Οἰσθαι δὲ ὥσπερ αἱ μεταφοραὶ. ΡΗΤΟΡ. βιβ. Γ. κεφ. δ.

“Indocti quoque (says the Roman critic) non sentientes, metaphora frequenter utuntur. Eas facimus, aut quia necesse est, aut quia significantius, aut quia decentius. Ubi nihil horum præstabit, quod transfertur improprium est.” Quintil. Institut. lib. viii. c. 6.

II. From

II. From considering the discovery of truth, as regulated by the understanding, we come now to take a view of this power as employed particularly in regulating the disposition of parts, in such a manner as contributes most effectually to promote the design of the whole. In this important province of its work, reason may be viewed both as laying down the *general* plan or method in which a subject is to be treated; and as ranging the ideas that occur upon entering into an examination of *particular* parts in a just and natural order.

I. That it is the understanding alone which regulates the general disposition of sentiments and illustrations in all cases whatever, will be acknowledged immediately, when we attend to its constant manner of procedure. From that flow recollection by which this faculty is distinguished, it is qualified to discover the best method of treating any subject, whether simple or copious; and after having thoroughly investigated its nature, to take cognizance of the propriety, as well as

comprehension of a general design*.—We observed formerly, that there is no species of

* Pliny speaks of just disposition, in the art of which we treat here, as the effect of an extensive acquaintance with the writings of the learned. “*Utinam Ordo, saltem & transitus & figuræ simul spectarentur. Nam invenire præclare, & enunciare magnifice, interdum etiam Barbari solent; disponere apte, &c. nisi ERUDITIS negatum est.*” *Epistol. lib. iii. Epist. 13.* This observation is no doubt thus far true, that by being conversant with works in which an exact method is laid down and followed out, we acquire a habit of ranging our ideas on every subject in a certain regulated succession, which is the effect in a great measure of art and attention. This is probably what our author means by that *APT* disposition which he appropriates peculiarly to the learned. Otherwise, as the reason of every man who is capable of inventing, prescribes to him likewise some method of ranging together the means of obtaining a certain end, nothing but a total deprivation of this faculty could make him jumble crude conceptions together in so discordant a manner, as to afford no glimmering of light by which we may trace his design. For (to adopt the language of a consummate judge) “*Ut opera extruentibus, satis non est saxa, atque materiam, & cætera ædificanti utilia congerere; nisi iis collocandis Artificum manus adhibeatur: sic in dicendo, quamlibet abundans rerum copia, cumulum tantum habeat atque congestum, nisi illas easdem in ordinem digestas, atque inter se*

com-

of Composition in which a certain harmonious arrangement of parts is not essentially necessary. This order, as was likewise observed, is no doubt much more conspicuous in the conduct of a philosophical theory *, or in treating of any complex subject, than in looser and more negligent composition, as it may be termed. But the perfection of this last, however seemingly irregular, lies not in the

commiffas *Dispositio* devinxerit. Oratio carens *hac virtute*, tumultuetur necesse est, & sine rectore fluitet; nec cohæreat sibi: multa repetat, multa transeat, velut nocte in ignotis locis errans; nec initio, nec fine proposito Casum potius quam Concilium sequatur." Quintil. Instit. lib. vii. c. i.

* The rules of philosophical disposition are comprehensively laid down in few words by one of the first and best of critics. Αναγκη του τροπου τωτον προαγειν εκ των ασαφεστερων μεν τη φυσει, ημιν δε σαφεστερων επι τα σαφετερα τη φυσει και γνωριμωτερα. Εσι δ' ημιν το πρωτον δηλα και σαφη τα συγκεχυμενα μαλλον. Υστερον δε εκ τωτων γινεται γνωριμα τα σοιχεια και αι αρχαι, διαιρῃσι ταυτα, δες. Τα παιδια το μεν πρωτον προσαγορευει παντας της ανδρας, πατηρας, και μητερας τας γυναικας. Υστερον δε διοριζει τωτων εκατερον. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. ΦΥΣΙΚ. βιβ. κεφ. Α.

want of disposition, which would include that of every other excellence; but in a certain accurate, though apparently negligent distribution of parts, in which the mind perceives symmetry, upon a close examination, and beauty, constituted as much by the happy position of elegant decorations, as by their original invention *.

* To the examples of this already adduced from the writings of the ancients, we need only to add at present, that the first of Roman philosophers appears to have been so sensible of the advantages that result from an accurate disposition in his own art, that he wrote a treatise purposely on this very subject, entitled *De Partitione Oratoria*, which is now unhappily lost. In his work however entitled *De Oratore* he treats this point at great length, and lays down the rules of exact arrangement with his usual precision. “*Ut aliquid ante rem dicamus, deinde ut rem exponamus; post ut eam probemus, nostris præfidiis confirmandis, contrariis refutandis; deinde ut concludamus, atque ita peroremus. Hoc dicendi genus natura ipsa præscribit.*” *Lib. ii. c. 76.* Again he says, “*Neque disputemus quibus assequi possimus ut ea quæ dicamus intelligantur. Latine scilicet dicendo verbis usitatis, &c. non discerptis sententiis, non præposteris temporibus, non confusis personis, non perturbato ordine.*” *Lib. iii. c. 13.*

Eloquence,

Eloquence, in whose composition an exact and perspicuous order ought invariably to be observed, is here altogether out of the question. But what shall we say of certain gay effusions of wit and humour, in which thoughts appear to be carelessly thrown out just as they occur, and of those animated fallies that derive their origin from a glowing and plastic imagination? —When these last consist only of a single thought, the end is effectuated as soon as this thought is placed before the mind in suitable colours; and the only disposition requisite for this purpose is that of language and imagery, of whose propriety the understanding decides with a precision proportioned to its strength and perspicacity. But when the design in both cases is somewhat more complex, as demanding a various assemblage of ideas, we may observe that a *climax* is either carried on as in the last instance, when it is from the *disposition* of inferior objects that the principal derives its importance; or in the first, that objects are put together so as to reflect light on each other, and to accomplish

comply with an end that is kept closely in sight. It is, as we may soon perceive, the judgment of an author that brings about both the purposes that are here taken notice of. When the circumstances in the conduct of an action or description are made to rise in their significance, so as to arrest the attention, as well as gradually exalt the reader's imagination as he proceeds; this process, though not perhaps considered in a proper view, just when the mind is intensely animated by the subject, yet upon recollection will discover an arrangement carried on by that faculty which is the parent of order; and which hath assigned to each member that place in contributing to produce this effect, which it ought most naturally and justly to occupy.

With regard in the same manner to the loosest effusions of humorous pleasantry, is it from unconnected fallies that we receive entertainment *? The description
that

* In conducting pieces of this kind, men of genius are sometimes apt to adopt from negligence a faulty expression,

that is replete with ridicule, pleases as much by being judiciously introduced, as when observed to be wrought up with pointed and particular strokes; and the tale that excites the most agreeable sensations, even though seemingly abruptly introduced, yet pleases in consequence of an apposite disposition, by which it is brought to coalesce with the design of the whole. Not only therefore does this governing power of the mind place ideas in a cer-

expression, (especially when a figured diction is attempted) which the malignity of an adversary will make him impute to design. It has ever been a common case, as an excellent modern critic observes, "*Viros eruditos sæpe improprium ex negligentia styli, quasi tropicum aut figuratum habere, ex quo errore fit, ut quod per incuriam effusum est, id de industria dictum existiment, adeoque urgeant quod urgeri non debet.*" Clerici Ars Crit. vol. I. part. ii. sect. 1. c. 11. This fault is commonly occasioned by having fixed attention too closely upon some one part, in endeavouring to obtain which the author unwarily lays himself open in another. That apparent negligence which gives some pieces so enchanting an air of elegance, is the effect of design, not of accident; and in order to be gained in perfection, *correctness* of language is as necessary to be attended to as musical arrangement.

tain methodised order, when those subjects are treated in which its operation is at first view *least perceptible*; but an extensive share of it may likewise be frequently discovered by a penetrating judge to have been exerted in a province, in which a superficial reader might deem its exercise to be *least requisite*. The understanding in all the instances we have here adduced, brings into one point of view the principal members or outlines of a figure; and though not perhaps exerting the same steady recollection that renders inferior means subservient through the whole course of a work to some purpose of importance, is yet equally conspicuous in the conduct of both.

2. Having thus taken a view of the sphere of understanding in the present art, as far as the general plan or method of a work is regulated by it; we now proceed to consider its influence on the disposition of subordinate parts, ranged together in such close and natural order as gives consistence and regularity to the whole.

As

As in the former observations we viewed reason as the parent of disposition in the general sense of that word; we are here to trace its operation more particularly in maintaining that secret connection throughout; without which, a performance must cease immediately not only to be edifying, but intelligible.

In the various species of Composition, the connection subsisting betwixt the parts of a discourse, is sometimes such as an ordinary share of understanding will enable a man to trace without difficulty; and sometimes so subtle and delicate as to be perceptible only to the reader of discernment. A connection of the first kind takes place in any performance, when we follow the author from one point to another in his procedure; and observe him attending first to the general parts of his plan, and next to the objects that fall successively under particular branches of it, until the work is completed by the union of all. When this is the case, it is a matter of no great difficulty to judge of the steps by which a process of any kind is
8 carried

carried on ; and even though we do not thoroughly comprehend intermediate sentiments, to pronounce upon the coherence and stability of the whole.

A connection however equally close, though of a much less obvious kind, takes place upon many occasions, chiefly in the higher kinds of the art of which we here treat ; and such as it is the province of discernment (in the proper sense of that term) to trace out particularly. This happens either when the thread of sentiment is wrought out so finely as to be perceptible, like the film of a spider, only to the eye that can *minutely* examine it ; or when strokes by which it is proposed to penetrate the heart are thrown out with little apparent regularity, and may be considered as bold deviations from the subject. With regard to the first, it often happens that thoughts are spun out in such a manner by passing through a metaphysical alembic, as to escape the cognizance both of the author or the critic. It is no doubt one of the surest proofs of understanding to be able to determine the boundary, beyond

yond which this power cannot ascertain the reality of objects ; and those who have rashly attempted to pass it, have involved themselves unavoidably in ambiguity and error. We find it often difficult to trace the connection of ideas in such disquisitions, even when these are sufficiently distinct from the abstracted nature of the subject that suggests them. The task appropriated here particularly to the reasoning power, is that of adhering steadily to a general purpose, and of connecting a series of intermediate ideas, by whose intervention it is to be gained both with that end, and with each other.

The second class of objects in which we observed that it is a matter of difficulty many times to trace a close connection, consists of strokes that exalt the imagination, or penetrate the heart. Here the understanding of the writer is deemed by the superficial to exert no conspicuous degree of influence. Our judgment, however, when we decide thus at random, is much too hastily formed in this matter. Attention will show those who are qualified to

judge of it properly, that in order to have any just admiration of these beauties, it is necessary that we should enter into the train of *concealed ideas* which establish a connection *not less real*, because it may be at first imperceptible betwixt these strong apostrophes and the circumstances immediately preceding, though the mind glances over such intermediate points of arrangement so suddenly at the time as not to feel their immediate impression *.

In

* We may add here to the remark in the text, that though when the mind is powerfully influenced by any representation, it considers not particularly the connection of this with the circumstances that preceded in every point of view, while the impression is yet strong; it is still in proportion as this correspondence is really perceived to take place in a greater or less extent, that a more or less powerful effect is produced by it upon the mind.—The celebrated adjuration of Demosthenes by the heroes who fell at Marathon and Salamis, to convince the Athenians that they had not done wrong in sacrificing their lives at Chæronea, must have affected but weakly those (if there were any such among his auditors) who knew only in general that the battles he referred to had been fought with the enemies of Greece, but were unacquainted with

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In order to set in a clearer light the truth of this remark, let it be farther observed, that though where a secret connection is perceived invariably to take place, we are not always ready to trace it out particularly; yet when it is either really wanting, or even when at any time we are at a loss to discover it, the defect

the peculiar honour reflected by these victories on the people of Athens, as well as with the glorious cause in which they fought. Those among them whose ancestors had fallen in these engagements, and who had been accustomed to revere them as the martyrs of liberty, would be strongly influenced by a circumstance that placed before them illustrious personages in so conspicuous and honourable a light. They would enter with ardour into the intention of the orator, and would compare together the causes thus forcibly illustrated. But a man qualified by this circumstance to compare the actions; interested in a manner personally in both; just arrived from the field of Chæronea, and observing that Demosthenes seems “to put that defeat (as an ingenious critic explains it, *Essay on Original Genius*, p. 212.) on a level with the glorious victories obtained at Marathon, &c.” by conceiving instantly the full meaning of the speaker, and losing no part of the connection, would be struck with this oath in a manner different from the others; and would feel all the emotion which it was intended to excite.

becomes then at once conspicuous, and is compensated by no excellence whatever, either of sentiment, or expression. Thus upon perusing the allegorical portrait of Cebes, he who receives the highest entertainment from observing the just and beautiful manner in which the various incidents of human life are pourtrayed, the errors of mankind detected, and the causes personified from which these last are derived; will yet, it is obvious, find disgust and satiety take place, even when he is contemplating perhaps the most exquisite part of the fable, as soon as he becomes unable either to observe that peculiar propriety with which the characters are delineated; or to mark that correspondence of his allegorical personages with the originals existing in his own mind, which they are brought to set before him. As we have therefore already seen coolness of recollection and exact proportion characterising in general the most perfect productions of poetry and eloquence; we shall find likewise a disposition equally harmonious taking place uniformly in the subor-

subordinate members. The real value of a performance in either art can only be estimated by that person who following the author in his wildest excursions, can trace the manner in which he hath been led to associate apparently dissimilar ideas; and thus beholds proportion and harmony subsisting through the whole piece; while he whose perceptions are less exquisite, or who is disqualified to judge of the subject, either censures particular parts as grossly defective, or condemns the whole as the disjointed reveries of a heated imagination.

These observations on the subject of connection will enable us to account very naturally for an opinion entertained by the less intelligent part of mankind, that judgment and imagination are seldom or never united in the same mind in any considerable measure. When a work is impressed principally by the latter of these powers, they cannot trace the operations of the former in the same manner as when it is conspicuous in an unornamented series of remarks and inferences; and thus

because reason doth not assume the only form in which they are accustomed to discern it, every man chooseth rather to suppose that some defect takes place in the mind of another, than to acknowledge it in his own. Thus it happens that as that internal and delicate perception by which the mind entering into the spirit of an Author, supplies certain concealed circumstances, is rarely to be met with; works in which there is the closest and most exquisite correspondence of parts are censured as deficient in this important character; and that faculty which arrangeth ideas is deemed to have been conferred in a very inconsiderable measure, where its energy is really exerted in an eminent degree*.

It

* It must no doubt be acknowledged, that when we consider arrangement in Composition as taking in many diversified objects, particularly in works of length, and where it is necessary to infuse a large proportion of the idioms of imagination; a man of genius will find considerable difficulty in preserving it uniformly through his whole performance. "Nam & conjuncta quæremus, & genera, & partes generibus subjectas; & similitudines,

It must no doubt be acknowledged, (as we shall endeavour more fully to evince afterwards) that it is the province of the *discerning*, rather than of the *judicious* critic, to fill up those chasms by which the productions of genius are often marked, so as to connect parts in a performance

dines, & dissimilitudines, & contraria, & consequentia, & consentanea, & quasi præcurrentia, & repugnantia, & causas rerum vestigabimus; & ea quæ ex causis orta sunt & majora, paria, minora quærimus." Cicer. de Orat. lib. ii. c. 39. Here the reader of discernment will be at no loss to make an allowance for the defect of a writer, and to distinguish such faults as arise from exuberance of imagination, from blemishes perhaps less in themselves, but compensated by no peculiar excellence either of sentiment or expression. Μένω δε ουκ ολιγα καὶ αὐτὰς ἀμαρτήματα (says the spirited and discerning Longinus) καὶ Ὁ μῆρου, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσαι μείγισται, καὶ ἡκιστα ταῖς πταισμασιν ἀρεσκομενος, ὁμῶς δὲ ἔχ' ἀμαρτήματα, μᾶλλον αὐτὰ ἐκκσια, καλῶν ἢ παροραματα δι' ἀμελείαν, εἰχῃ πρὸς καὶ ὡς εἴτυχεν, ὑπὸ μιγαλοφύας ἀνεπίστατος παρενθνεγε-μενα. Ἐπειτοὶ γε ἀπτῶτος ὁ Ἀπολλωνίος ὁ τῶν Ἀργοναυ-τικῶν Ποιητῆς, καὶ τοῖς βουκολικοῖς πλὴν ολίγων τῶν ἐξοθεν ὁ Θεορίτος ἐπιτυχέστατος. Ἀρουν ὈΜΗΡΟΣ ἀν μᾶλλον ἢ Ἀπολλωνίος ἐθελοῖς γενεσθαι, &c. ΠΕΡΙ ΤΥΧΟΥΣ, τμήμ. ΑΙ.

that may be deemed to have little relation to each other. As high colouring commonly renders its objects obscure, at least to those who cannot view the image and its original apart from each other; so the breaks and daring sallies of an enraptured imagination are apt to render the whole unintelligible. Even when this power operates not in so conspicuous a manner, it happens as often that obscurity becomes characteristical of a work in which *too much* is left to be supplied by the reader, as that disgust is excited in him when too little appears for this purpose. In order therefore to preserve the just medium betwixt these extremes, as the discerning faculty which judgeth of the excursions of genius, ought to regulate those so as easily to comprehend their connection, so the understanding in other branches of Composition should discover its thorough knowledge of a subject, by placing every idea clearly before the mind of a reader, and by leaving only such thoughts to be suggested by him as the objects laid open to him naturally and unavoidably introduce.

Thus

Thus it is that a writer of good sense most clearly evinceth the solidity and compass of his judgment. A reader is flattered when he finds it in his power to complete as it were the intention of the author upon every topic by some obvious additions of his own; and whether conscious or not that these were designedly left to him, is sensible of no deficiency from such an omission in point of connection.

III. As in the preceding observations we have endeavoured to show the process by which reason either effectuates the discovery of truth, or establisheth order and connection in every branch of Composition; we are next to consider it as conspicuous in that comprehensive view of a subject which shows that no material part hath escaped attention. This power of comprehending and of adjusting a variety of parts to each other, is peculiarly characteristic of the judgment of a writer; and serves to distinguish it from imagination (properly so called) which starts from one object to another without ever taking in or regulating a great and diversified series.

ries. This indication of an enlarged understanding, in order to be complete, demands attention to be extended to a much greater diversity of objects than we may at first view suppose. It requires not only that every part of any consequence should be included in the general estimate of a subject, which though difficult, it is least uneasy to perform; but that the manner of treating every point of whatever kind, should be that which is best adapted to its nature; and the illustrations made use of, such as convey the most adequate idea of their original objects that can possibly be presented. It often happens that a mind equal to the first of these requisitions is deficient in the last.—To the full exhibition even of a complicated theme when viewed in general, nothing more is in fact necessary, than that observation which regulates the draught and the outlines of a figure; of whose fitness for *this purpose* we may pronounce without hesitation; while we suspend our judgment of it as adequate to the fullest display of subordinate parts, until

until these fall separately under examination.

When we mention as an evidence of comprehension, the treating every point in the manner that is best adapted to its nature, we are aware that a certain versatility as well as compass of thought is necessary to this purpose which is rarely to be met with. The knowledge of the best method of treating any subject, and the power of carrying this with adequate energy into execution, are circumstances altogether different from each other. Many persons sufficiently understand the importance and utility of means which they are yet unable to employ properly in the pursuit of a certain end. The mind is seldom equal to every part of a theme that requires its faculties to act in various, and sometimes in opposite directions. In some it acts as in its native element. But in others, the faculty required to predominate appears to have been forcibly wrested (if we may thus express it) from its natural bias. Its exertions are therefore unequal, its expression strained, and its conduct in general of that
kind,

kind, which bespeaks a man who is better able to judge, than qualified to execute. Comprehension of intellect however, though it may be considered in some sense as independent of adequate execution, is then powerfully evidenced, when an author though not discovering equal mastery in the management of every inferior part of his subject, especially when consisting of many divisions; yet adopts and follows out a method that is upon the whole agreeable; and such as shows the just degree of energy in some cases, and a decent aptitude in all. We may observe indeed as a criterion universally characteristical of this faculty that in proportion as the judgment of a writer is extensive, he will more obviously perceive what weight ought to be laid, either upon points which an ordinary reader might overlook, but which introduced and explained with propriety impress a sentiment forcibly on the mind; or upon the general strain of a character, as it may thus be rendered appropriated and interesting.

I. Examples

1. Examples to confirm the truth of these remarks will occur upon examining the most approved standards either of philosophy or of the fine arts. The Socratic method of reasoning, beyond all others, appears to have arisen from this knowledge of all the circumstances that carry conviction to the understanding. Thus we find in the Dialogues of Plato, the philosopher not merely suiting his arguments as nearly as possible to the character of the speakers; but introducing his subjects from the simplest occurrences, and drawing his illustrations from such remote, and yet natural resources, as most strongly evinced his address and comprehension *. In this manner

* The reader who contemplates the Socratic manner in the present point of light, will be entertained as well as instructed by attending to the various methods that are successively employed to promote the ends of this philosophy. He will find Socrates sometimes (as in the Euthyphron) obtaining the confidence of a superstitious bigot by a series of compliments artfully addressed to his ruling passion, and by touching his weakness with so delicate a hand as to make him pleased and satisfied with reasoning that exposeth it. At others, (as

manner truths of the greatest importance are gradually laid open to persons whose

(as in the Protagoras) after having soothed the pride of the imperious sophist, and disposed him to listen with patience to a few simple questions apparently directed only to obtain information, he lays open the falsity of his maxims; and thus inculcates the sublime doctrines of philosophy with irresistible energy, while he appears to be conversing familiarly on the plainest topics, and even about the simplest utensils of life. Varying at other times his method of address to the character of more modest and dispassionate hearers, we may observe this great man in the Meno, Theagis, Crito, Lysis, and the two Alcibiades, discoursing of virtue, wisdom, propriety of conduct, friendship, rectitude, prayer, &c. and in a manner at the same time so simple and comprehensive, happily uniting the dignity of the philosopher with the affability of the friend, that we cease to wonder at the sublime panygeric made upon him in his *own style* likewise, by the young Alcibiades, who compared him to those statues of sylvan deities whose outside appeared rough and unpolished, but when opened were found only to be *cases* containing images of ALL THE GODS! The Protagoras and Crito of Plato contain in particular striking evidences of the philosopher's comprehensive view of things. In the former the sophist's arguments are refuted by reasoning drawn as it should seem from very distant resources. In the latter, Socrates takes a most extensive survey of an important subject, in answering the reasons by which his friend would have persuaded him to make his escape.

curiosity

curiosity is deeply interested in the process. Nor is the full design of the philosopher perceived by his antagonist, until the conclusion, which he aims to establish, strikes at last with irresistible evidence upon the mind.

It is scarce possible to conceive any method more expressive of a comprehensive understanding than that which is here presented to us, when properly carried on. In order to bring it successfully into practice, it was necessary that the philosopher, after being fully satisfied of that truth which he intended to prove to his adversary, should be able to conduct in such a manner intermediate means apparently foreign to his purpose, but tending in reality directly to it; as that every obstruction being removed, the mind should yield that assent which convincing argumentation finally commands.

2. It was remarked likewise that as an enlarged understanding becomes thus conspicuous in the conduct of an argumentative detail, it is not less so in maintaining upon some occasions consistency of character.

rafter. Comprehension of intellect is undoubtedly evinced when a character in which various excellencies, imperfections, and foibles are blended, is maintained with so much propriety through an extensive work, as to be known and approved at all times by those striking signatures that distinguish it from others. We must carefully separate here the province of imagination in accomplishing this purpose from that of understanding. It is undoubtedly by an effort of the first of these, that those incidents are invented which call into conspicuous exercise the qualities that are here combined in various assemblage. But it is by the last that an affinity is established universally betwixt the event and the quality displayed by it, and the incidents in general are disposed in such a manner as to show the whole to the highest possible advantage. Of this compass of thought by which a writer may evince the clearness as well as extent of his understanding, we shall have occasion to treat more particularly, when we come to examine the species

cies of Composition in which it is most completely displayed.

IV. We have now considered the province of the reasoning faculty in the art of Composition as constituted by the invention of a theory, the arrangement and disposition of parts, and the comprehensive estimate which it forms of a subject. From our remarks on the general operations of this power in the departments abovementioned, it will appear, that a very large proportion of it may take place, and in fact does so upon many occasions without being discovered. An ordinary observer therefore, when effects arising from judgment are blended with such as are derived from imagination; without some general criterion by which the influence of reason may be always determined, will be apt to form unjust and superficial estimates. In order therefore to set this matter in a proper light, and to complete our view of the operations of the understanding as far as the present subject is concerned; we may in general observe, that wherever judgment exerts any considerable degree of in-

fluence, something just and apposite, something particularly appropriated to the subject or occasion, will appear in *the sentiment* of a performance. Other marks by which its prevalence may be discovered, as strength of argument, justness of design, symmetry of parts, or progression of evidence, either relate to particular arts, or to those branches of Composition which require this faculty most eminently to predominate. But in all productions whatever, *propriety of sentiment* is invariably characteristical of an author's understanding; and points indeed so naturally to this original, as never, when discovered, to be ascribed to another. But what, it will be said, is meant by this term *propriety* when applied to the sentiment of Composition in the various species of the art? It is a vague and general designation that admits of different views, according to that branch of the present subject to which it is applied; and its sense ought therefore to be determined and exemplified in each of these departments considered by itself. This requisition is undoubtedly just, and in order to answer it, we must enter some-

somewhat more particularly into the subject.

Propriety characterising the different species of Composition, suggests different ideas, according to the nature and tendency of each. Thus in philosophy, where it is expected that every position will be confirmed by the best adapted evidence, propriety of sentiment is said to obtain when the author, though sometimes drawn into little digressions, yet keeps close in general to the principal object of his research; and selects from the various arguments or illustrations that occur to him, those whose immediate tendency is to prove or explain the point which he hath ultimately in view *. In history, where the narrative

manner

* No ancient writer appears to have studied this philosophical propriety more than the elegant philosopher mentioned in the preceding note. It is true indeed, that he freely indulges himself in digressive circumstances; and his sublime imagination even catcheth at sometimes the figures and diction of poetry. See his ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ, ab init. See likewise vol. ii. of this work, sect. iii. But when any point of real impor-

manner takes place of the didactic, sentiments have propriety, when these grow as it were naturally out of the detail, and seem to be necessary parts of the work itself, rather than superfluities that may be lopped off from it*. In eloquence, propriety

tance is canvassed, the reasoning is usually conducted with great accuracy and attention. Thus Socrates says to his friend in the true spirit of a philosopher: Σκοπεῖσθαι οὐν χρὴ ἡμᾶς εἴτε ταῦτα πράκτεον εἴτε μὴ. Ὡς ἐγώ, ἔ μόνος νῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰεὶ τοιαῦτος, ὡς τῶν ἑτῶν μὴδενὶ ἀλλῶ πείθεσθαι ἢ τῷ λόγῳ ὅς ἀν μοι λογιζομένῳ βέλτιστος φαίνεται. τῆς δὲ Λογῆς ἔς ἐν τῷ ἐμπροσθεν ἐλέγον οὐ δύναμαι νῦν ἐκβαλεῖν ἐπεὶ μοι ἡ τύχη γέγονεν. Ἀλλὰ σκέδον τι ὁμοίᾳ φαίνονται μοι, καὶ τοιαῦτος πρῶτον καὶ τιμῶ ὡς καὶ πρότερον, &c. ΠΛΑΤ. ΚΡΙΤ.

* There is no occasion here for methodised observations, and protracted periods. The former give a stiff air to the historian's composition. The latter fatigue instead of entertaining the reader. Comprehension and concise expression are the two criteria by which thoughts that grow out of historial narration ought always to be characterised. When Livy has related at large a decree of the Athenian people against Philip, from whose resentment they hoped to be protected by the Romans, he gives his own sense of their conduct

by

priety of sentiment requires, that the orator should fix upon such motives and arguments

by saying,—“*Athenienses quidem literis, verbisque quibus solis valent, bellum adversus Philippum gerebant.*”

Dec. iv. lib. i. These few words contain as much sense as might be made to fill out a volume. They represent the low state to which the powerful republic of Athens was reduced; and the term *bellum* particularly in the present connection, throws the strongest ridicule on their procedure. Of a different kind from this is the following observation of one of the most judicious of Roman historians, on the funeral of Augustus.

Yet it is interwoven in such a manner into the body of his work, that this last would have seemed to be incomplete without it. “*Die funeris, milites velut præsidio stetere, multum iridentibus qui ipsi viderint, quique a parentibus acceperant, diem illum crudi adhuc servitii & libertatis improspere repetitæ, cum occisus Dictator Cæsar, aliis pessimum, aliis pulcherrimum facinus videretur: nunc senem principem longa potentia, provisus etiam hæredum in rempublicam opibus, auxilio scilicet militari tuendum, ut sepultura quieta foret.*” Annal. lib. i. This manner of laying circumstances together hath an excellent effect in history. It carries back the reader upon the winding up of a scene, to the recollection of events that might have escaped his memory; and placeth these in such a light as is at the same time agreeable and instructive. Let us take one other example of this propriety of sen-

ments as he knows will make the most lasting impression upon the audience to whom his discourse is addressed; and that the whole should be enforced by observations judiciously adapted to the nature of the subject, and to the circumstances of the hearers *.—With regard to the poetic art indeed,

timent from a modern historian. Voltaire speaking of the administration of France under the duke of Orleans, observes, that the celebrated System of Law which seemed to threaten the state with ruin, contributed in the event to support and even enrich it. It gave an active spirit to the nation, occasioned the revival of commerce, and gave birth to the India company, which had been ruined in the wars.

This sensible observation hath great propriety in this connection. It is indeed suggested naturally by the preceding account of things. But the effect of a civil war, and that of this *great game*, (as he justly calls it) upon the human mind, when viewed philosophically as improving certain faculties of it, seems at the same time a new and instructive method of treating the subject, as such considerations tend to enlarge our knowledge of human nature.

* It hath been often observed with truth, that the christian religion affords a wider field to the orator, and proposeth nobler and more animating motives to influence the conduct of mankind, than any other system of principles whatever. Yet it must at the same time

indeed, as it admits of much greater variety of Composition than any of the

be acknowledged, that in *propriety of sentiment*, considered as arising from an attention to the *peculiar circumstances of the hearers*, the subjects on which ancient orators were led to expatiate suggested arguments more persuasive as being drawn from immediate exigencies, than could have arisen from a plan of duty whose moral sanctions were not instantly to take place. Thus Demosthenes calling up to the Athenians the ghosts of those who fell at Marathon and Salamis, as formerly referred to; Tully invoking the Alban groves and altars polluted by the debauchery of Claudius; Manlius, when accused of treason before the Roman people, pointing to the Capitol, which in their own memory had been saved from destruction by his intrepidity; and Gracchus significantly directing the eyes of his audience to the very spot that had been stained with the blood of his brother;—these it is obvious laid before their hearers motives of powerful and irresistible energy. Vide Demosthen. de Coron. Cicer. pro Milon. Liv. lib. vi. c. 20. and Cicer. de Orat. lib. iii. c. 56. On the other hand however, it ought to be observed at the same time, that if we consider the motives of christianity as operating indeed more universally, but less instantaneously than the former; it will follow that the christian orator may evince a very superior degree of judgment, by selecting from such as occur to him those that are best adapted to his purpose; and by applying them in that manner which he knows will have the strongest and most permanent effect.

others it is more easy in most cases to perceive the effects of this propriety of sentiment, than to say particularly by what it it is constituted. Without however having recourse to the various species of this art, it may be observed, that we always applaud the judgment of the writer, when we find moral and instructive sentiments wrought into his performance, without either leading the reader from the subject, or breaking the unity of design *. In descriptive

* In the Georgics of Virgil (a theme indeed naturally productive of moral observation) the reader whose mind is susceptible of impression from sentiments that rise out of a pastoral subject, will find many of these introduced with the strictest propriety. To a man who had been disappointed in pursuing the plans of ambition, how just must the following observation have appeared which the subject of the poet so obviously introduceth

Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes,
 Pana, Sylvanumque finem, Nymphasque sorores!
 Illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum
 Flexit,——
 Non res Romanæ perituraque regna; neque ille
 Aut doluit miserans inopem, aut invidit habenti.

GEOR. lib. ii.

This

scriptive pieces particularly we view these as bustoes disposed artfully in variegated scenery, where they form agreeable and attractive decorations.

This propriety of sentiment likewise constitutes one of the principal beauties of Thomson's Seasons ; a work so universally read, that the selection of any particular example is rendered unnecessary. One of the most striking instances of this kind the author remembers to have met with, is in a little ode by Mr. Gray, beginning "Lo where the rosy-bosomed hours, &c." After having painted in rich and glowing imagery the insect youth as on the wing,

Eager to taste the honied spring,

And float amid the liquid noon, &c.

these images are applied with exquisite propriety in the following moral reflection arising likewise immediately from the subject.

To contemplation's sober eye

Such is the race of man ;

And they that *creep*, and they that *fly*,

Shall end where they began.

Alike the *busy* and the *gay*

But *flutter* thro' life's *little day*,

In Fortune's *varying colours* dress'd ;

Brush'd by the hand of *rough mischance*,

Or *chill'd* by age, their *airy dance*,

They leave in dust to rest. GRAY's Odes.

To a reader possessed of poetic feeling, this painting will need no illustration. To one who wants this sensibility, no illustration would be of use.

The

The understanding claims as a province peculiarly its own; the power of distinguishing any performance by this characteristic of propriety. It effectuates this purpose by giving close attention as well to the nature of objects, as to the justness of their disposition; and by taking into its estimate whatever is necessary to render the exhibition adequate and complete. Thus it is that the sentiment in historical narration rises so naturally out of the detail, as if it made a part of, and was necessary to sum it up. Thus a clear relation is perceived to take place in the disquisitions of philosophy, betwixt the observations or arguments, and the end, whether an ultimate or subordinate one, which these are adduced to bring about. In the first case, a judicious and of consequence comprehensive survey of events includes those sentiments that either render the narration instructive, or serve to connect one part of the subject with another; in both which cases their propriety is obvious. In the last instance where narration takes no place, it is the power of understanding likewise

that

that by permitting nothing to pass that is either frivolous or unappropriated, renders the whole an object of rational approbation.

With regard to the arts of eloquence and poetry, where an ampler range is opened to imagination; can any reason be assigned why effects of *the same kind* should not likewise be considered as derived from the same original? And does it not indicate a defect of this faculty, when these are wholly overlooked as *signatures of it*, merely perhaps because they appear in a species of richer and more diversified Composition? At many times indeed we may venture to affirm, that a single thought thrown out at once, and seeming to rise out of the subject by a kind of new creation, will discover to a mind *capable of taking in its whole force*, greater extent of judgment and deeper insight into the springs by which the mind is most powerfully actuated, than those elaborate researches by which truth is elucidated, after carrying on a progressive and complicated detail.

This

This attention to propriety of sentiment as the test of understanding, will show us that the opinion, however universally prevalent, is fallacious, that the distinguishing criterion of this power is *strength* and *justness* of argument. In order to judge properly of this point, we must make allowances for the various subjects of speculation, each requiring to be treated in a manner peculiar to itself. As florid epithets therefore, and pompous declamation, would be justly looked upon in a discourse professedly philosophical to be evidences of a defective understanding; so a series of reasoning uniformly supported in a piece (which as far as any subject can be treated in this manner) ought to be purely pathetic or descriptive, indicates in fact a deficiency of judgment as much as the former. The difference only is, that in the one case an author discovers that defect in the execution of his subject, which in the other is conspicuous from his choice of it.

To the criteria abovementioned as characteristical universally of the mental power, whose office we are here considering, we may
add

add as the last indication, that it is this faculty which makes the expression bear a just relation to the sentiment in any species of Composition; and that gives accuracy in the application of images to those objects which they are brought to illustrate. The original invention of these last is unquestionably owing to imagination. We cannot however have a surer proof in any particular instance of the superiority of this faculty above that of reason, than when we observe images to be indiscriminately scattered through a work without regard to the thoughts as not requiring to be thus illustrated; or when we find these discordant to their objects, and, like shreds of tapestry before the piece is completed, exhibiting only a single limb, or fragment of the figure, instead of setting the whole before the eye in its natural proportion. From that invariable attention to arrangement and symmetry, which we have observed to characterise reason, we may lay it down as a principle, that whatever errors a heated imagination may give occasion to in the application of images as consisting

sisting of foreign and unappropriated circumstances, yet we shall seldom or never find a *judicious* author employing these when they are obviously inadequate; or when by recurring too frequently they pall upon the mind, and throw an air of obscurity on the piece.

It is by the concurrence of the circumstances thus enumerated and explained that Composition is rendered *correct*. This important character therefore obtains perfection in consequence of a steady and assiduous exertion of judgment. The degree in which it ought to obtain, the attention it should exercise, and its effect in general on the art of which we treat here, will be considered in a subsequent branch of the work.

Thus we have endeavoured to lay before the reader some account of the extensive province assigned to the great faculty by which man is distinguished from inferior creatures, in the various departments of Composition. The reader will observe that in our remarks on this subject, we have kept in sight the operations of this
faculty

faculty considered apart from the others; that effects derived from *reason alone*, may be clearly discriminated from those that owe their origin either to some other mental quality, or to a combination of all. By pursuing this course, we propose to accomplish a beneficial purpose both to an author and his critic. The first, when he is meditating a design, may judge from the criteria that are here laid down as showing the prevalence of understanding, how far his own is adequate to it, and in what points it may be deficient. The last, when by having viewed the faculties of the mind in this light, he knows how to put every thing to its *proper account*, will be unembarrassed in the whole of his procedure; and should the observations on this branch of the present subject be found to have propriety, may found his decision on surer evidences, than he who takes a general and indiscriminate survey.

SECTION III.

Of the influence of Imagination in Composition.

IMAGINATION, or the inventive faculty as it is denominated, we have already defined as employed in Composition, to be that “which strikes out happy imitations, forms original assemblages of ideas; and thus supplies the materials of those just and beautiful illustrations, which at the same time improve the *expression* in this art, and heighten the effect of sentiment*.”

It is proper to observe before we enter particularly into this subject, that this intellectual power cannot be viewed precisely in the same light as the former; which we contemplated as single and independent of every other. The loose and unconnected effusions of fancy wrought into no form by the controul of reason, can only be viewed as the extravagant ravings of a madman. We propose therefore here to follow as closely as possible the track of

* Sect. I.

this excentric faculty; and to point out effects of which it is ultimately the cause:— but, as we shall not always take notice of the influence exerted by the understanding in rendering these effects the objects of *rational* entertainment, the reader himself must separate the operations of these powers from each other, in which he may receive direction from the preceding observations.

We have in the course of this work frequently distinguished imagination by the designation of the *inventive power* *, that
its

* A critic of the present age endeavours to make a distinction betwixt *invention* and *imagination*, which he says, “ though nearly allied *in their signification*, yet are “ somewhat different from each other.” Invention he defines to be “ the *faculty* of discovering *certain relations* “ among various objects, from whence we form a new “ and beautiful association of ideas. Imagination is “ the faculty of illustrating and embellishing those “ ideas by new, apt, and striking images and figures.” —I am entirely of this gentleman’s mind with regard to the necessity of giving clear definitions of the terms we employ; without which it is true that we may “ cavil “ without end, and create confusion instead of *begetting* “ conviction.”

its operations may be easily and clearly known from these of any other intellectual endowment.

"conviction." See Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 447, 448. But by a want of precision in the present case, I am afraid that his own definitions give rise to some part of those effects which he so freely and justly censures. "Invention he says is the *faculty* of discovering certain relations, &c." The term *faculty* employed here, naturally suggests the idea of some intellectual power different from those with which we are acquainted, as necessarily productive of certain consequences. It ought therefore to have been analysed; i. e. the author should have shown, either in what respects it is distinct from the others, or in what manner it is constituted by their union. Neither of these however has this writer attempted, further than by telling us, that we discover by it *certain* relations, &c. *Certain* relations! What relations? Those that enable us "to form a *new* and *beautiful* association of ideas." In an association of ideas recommended by *novelty*, we have shown in the preceding section, that the understanding or judgment may upon some occasions be *solely* employed. See p. 28, &c. With regard to the *beauty* of such association, I would ask in what manner is this character constituted? Does it lie in the just combination, and methodical arrangement of ideas? To confer according to our author's own decision the province of judgment. See p. 449. From these observations it would seem, that by the faculty here termed invention, our author means that of reason, or understanding. But this he will

endowment. As this term must occur so frequently when we treat of imagination, it

will not permit us to suppose. For enumerating in the very next page the qualities that constitute genius, he mentions invention and judgment as faculties perfectly distinct from each other. Again,—is this beauty constituted by the novelty, *aptitude*, and vivacity of the colours with which ideas are decorated?—No.—These characters are stamped on Composition by imagination which it is his business to distinguish from invention.—Since then this extraordinary faculty is distinct both from judgment and imagination separately viewed, does it arise from the union of both powers?—Neither is this the case according to this gentleman's idea of the term, for in the enumeration above referred to, he takes notice of invention as a faculty by which the poet is enabled to perceive the relations of objects, and to form a striking and interesting union of these, p. 449, before he assigns the provinces either of imagination or of reason in forming his character.—Yet in the same page, after having ascribed to invention a power of placing objects in a certain “striking union,” he mentions this “striking union” as the effect not of invention, but of “solid and correct judgment.” This ingenious gentleman (in whose work, notwithstanding these inadvertencies, there is much just and valuable criticism) has embarrassed himself in his account of this characteristic of genius, by giving the designation of a *faculty* of the mind to something that is only to be considered as indicating its existence. Invention is not

it will throw light on its various modes of exertion, if we endeavour to determine particularly the meaning of the phrase.

Invention

itself an intellectual power. It is an effect sometimes derived from reason, when principles already known are laid together in such a manner, as to give rise to some conclusion in which there is at the same time both novelty and truth: sometimes it proceeds from a warm imagination, as when unusual and striking assemblages of ideas are presented to the mind; or even when known truths are placed in a light remarkably attractive by new and peculiarly happy illustrations. It is an effect of discernment constituted by the union of both these powers, when judgment is conspicuous at the same time in the methodised arrangement of ideas, and imagination in their originality, and manner of being set off to advantage. This last however is denominated with peculiar propriety the *inventive faculty*, because its combinations being more uncommon than those of the understanding, and *seeming* often to have been effectuated by a glance of thought, we ascribe to imagination a kind of creative energy of which the former when left to itself appears not to participate. It is to this power of the mind likewise as we shall show afterwards, that discernment owes its quickness of perception, as well as its choice of extraordinary means. That its province in Composition is much more extensive than that which we have seen prescribed to it by this author of embellishing ideas by new, and striking figures,

Invention as a general designation is applied to every thing in which there is novelty. Fancy therefore viewed as the parent of invention, is considered as the original source of those new and striking assemblages or imitations which a mind endowed with any large proportion of it is said to *create*. But what are we to understand by this last epithet? The explanation of it will include that of the other, and is indeed the more necessary, as terms of this kind not properly understood when applied to the human mind, are apt to suggest to an unintelligent reader a sense which the authors never meant to convey by them.— In the most abstracted sense of this word as relating to discoveries purely *original*, of which the senses receive no patterns, we must be convinced at once, that with regard to man, it can have no significance or propriety whatever. The ideas infinitely diversified that are conveyed to us by the senses; or that arise from the vari-

figures, we shall endeavour to evince at large when we consider the various manners in which its energy is displayed.

ous lights in which the mind contemplates its own operations,—these are indeed by what we term a plastic imagination associated, compounded, and diversified at pleasure. Discernment, in the proper acceptance of that term, is discovered in seizing remote points of resemblance betwixt objects that have no apparent familiarity; and in the elucidation of truth from topics which the man of mere fancy, or of mere reason might wholly overlook. But in the whole of this process, the originality obviously results from the manner in which objects are selected and put together, so as to form upon the whole an unusual combination; though these when separately viewed may each of them be such as the mind hath formerly been habituated to contemplate.

From this power of placing known truths in such points of view as make a forcible and permanent impression, those discoveries arise in which philosophical investigation is made use of. Here the mind having considered the most probable means of obtaining a certain purpose, lays down a few

few simple and obvious truths from which it forms more compounded exhibitions in a process closely superintended by the faculty that establisheth methodical arrangement. Ideas that are familiar to the mind when separated from each other, impress some truth that is new to it, in consequence of a certain peculiar disposition; and impart in such association truths that arrest not attention more strongly by their originality, (if that term may here be applied with justice) than they may be subservient to edification in consequence of their comprehensive nature and importance. By varying a little a similar train of familiar perceptions we shall easily comprehend the precise meaning of the term Invention when applied to the various branches of scientific enquiry; and the different sense in which it is taken from the epithet *creative* which distinguisheth other species of Composition. Thus in every kind of analogical reasoning, experience supplies the materials upon which the theory proceeds. We are indeed struck in the prosecution of reasoning conducted on this plan, when

an obvious relation is discovered to take place betwixt things that appeared to be wholly different. But the satisfaction derived from such an enquiry ariseth as we find upon reviewing the process, not from any originality of the objects themselves, but merely from the novelty of that situation in which these are exposed to view.

Thus far, having followed out the first idea of invention as constituted by any exhibition in which there is *novelty*, we may ascribe it with propriety to the philosopher who conducts to some unexpected conclusion a series of arguments or to the orator, who fixeth on the most apposite topics of persuasion*. These however, though
standing

* There appears to be a remarkable difference of opinion betwixt one of the first of ancient and of modern writers with regard to the meaning of the term Invention. Cicero in his work entitled *De Inventione*, of which only one half remains at present, considers this as the principal character of an orator. Bacon, on the contrary, will not admit that he who fixeth on the best arguments hath any title to the designation of an inventor. “*Inventio argumentorum* (says he) *Inventio proprie non est. Invenire enim est ignota detegere;*

standing high in their distinct professions, and justly esteemed as men of genius, yet occupy only a secondary rank as inventors, when compared with him who presents every moment new assemblages of objects to the mind, illuminated with the richest colouring; and to whose genius we apply the designation of *creative* in consequence of ideas rising as it would seem spontane-

non ante cognita recipere aut revocare.” De Augment. Scient. lib. v. c. 3. But the sentiments of these upon the present subject may be easily reconciled. Should it be allowed that the choice and application of arguments may discover no eminent share of invention, yet it is undoubtedly shown when these arguments are brought to enforce some new proposition. This is obviously the “ignota detegere” which he speaks of, and its author is unquestionably possessed of invention. The selection and application of topics of persuasion in eloquence denominate the same character, and it is this which Cicero calls the principal part of eloquence. Another ancient writer considers not only invention in general, but various degrees of it as discovered here.

Αλλ' επει των πρωβληματων ειδη ποικιλα, και των πραγματος αι ζητησεις διαφοροι, ποικιλας, και τας ΕΥΡΕΣΕΙΣ παραδωσκομεν ως τεθεισης υποθεσεως, αυτικα ειδεναιεφ' ο τρεπτεον εστιν εις ευρεσιν της προκατασκευας τεχνικην. ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝ. περι ΕΥΡΕΣ. βιβ. β. τμημ. Α.

ously

ously from the thought of the writer, and falling like the rude materials of the universe into beautiful arrangement. It is in this process that we are to look for the great principle of *poetic imitation*. In the strict sense of that word, the poet is no more a creator or maker than the historian or philosopher. But his imagination is struck with expressions in the various objects contemplated by it, which it possesseth likewise the power of painting in the most vivid colours. When many of these are brought together, the same faculty that perceived them at first, associates them in a manner altogether unusual. To these associations we give the designation ORIGINAL; and to the power which produced them, that of INVENTIVE OR CREATIVE*.

From

* As this curious and important branch of the subject may appear to require a fuller discussion than we have here had occasion to afford it in the text, we shall here throw together a few additional observations on it. Aristotle not only considers every species of poetry as derived from imitation, but he points out the most distinguishing branches of the art, as taking their rise from that bias of the character. Σεμνότεροι τας καλὰς

From the whole reflection will point out to us two distinct causes in the mind, from which

εμιμουνοτο πράξεις, &c. οι δε Ευτελεστεροι τα των φανλων, πρωτου ψωγης ποιουντες, &c. περι ΠΟΙΗΤ. κεφ. Δ. Pursuing this train of thought a little further, we may observe, that in the scale of genius, those who are denominated makers or inventors are such as copy immediately from nature, as their great and perfect original. Those who possess a very considerable share of this character without ever rising to a level with the first, are such as sometimes strike out new figures in the contemplation of this consummate pattern, and sometimes content themselves with beautifying and improving upon the inventions of others. The last class, wholly confined to the latter species of imitation are disqualified by any art to reach the former; and are therefore never supposed to be distinguished by *original merit*. To the two first of these the term inventive may be applied with propriety, if we consider it as a criterion by which the highest degree of genius may be distinguished from an inferior, or very moderate proportion of it; in which case he who stands in the lowest rank appears only as a servile and secondary imitator. It is however in strict truth improper to apply the word imitation merely to a few of the arts; when upon taking a more enlarged view of things, we shall find some particular species of imitation characterising every branch of Composition. Thus the philosopher in his most abstracted researches evidently discovers this principle,

which every species of originality is ultimately to be traced. The one is, its power of forming such various, new, and striking

ciple, when he delineates the forms either of external or of internal beauty, from that perfect model which is the object of his senses, or from that image which he perceives to be imprinted on the mind. In copying likewise the expression of any intellectual power, we fall naturally into some mode of imitation. This becomes immediately perceptible when the effects of any passion are to be represented, as the expression is then *tinged* (if we may adopt that epithet) with the colour required to predominate; and the images are rendered as significant as possible of the object to be described. A kind of secondary imitation we may observe to prevail among the several arts, whose idioms being mutually transfused give peculiar beauty and energy to each other. Thus an eminent ancient historian shows the origin of rhetoric upon this principle, and explains in a very ingenious manner the steps by which it was carried forward. Πρωτιστα γὰρ ἡ ποιητικὴ κατασκευὴ παρηλθεν εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ εὐδοκίμησεν. Εἶτα ἐκείνου ΜΙΜΟΤΜΕΝΟΙ λυσάντες τὸ μέτρον, τ' ἄλλα δὲ φυλάξαντες τὰ ποιητικὰ συνεγράψαν οἱ περὶ Κασίου, περὶ Φερεκύδην, καὶ Ἑκαταίων. Εἴτοι οἱ ὑπερὸν ἀφαιρουντες αἰετὶ τῶν τριῶν εἰς τὸ νῦν εἶδος κατήγαγον ὡς ἀν' ἀπὸ Ὑψους τίνος, ΣΤΡΑΒ. βιβ. Α. We shall have occasion to show afterwards that this beautiful species of imitation prevailed much more among the ancients than it is permitted to do in modern times.

combinations

combinations of truths universally acknowledged as open at last unexpected avenues of knowledge. The other is its propensity to imitate upon all occasions the different characters and appearances of nature; whether viewed as exhibiting the most beautiful external scenery; or throwing expressions infinitely diversified into the characters of men. In proportion as its perception of these last extends to remote circumstances and connections; and such as are least perceptible, the marks of originality are rendered still more conspicuous; and in consequence of the *novelty* which these give to a performance the imitative powers of the author acquire the denomination of invention.

That this power of imitation is something distinct from that which we denominate the reasoning faculty, it will require little attention to evince. The difference must indeed be rendered obvious from this single consideration; that an eminent share of the first of these often distinguisheth men, who are void of the last, at least with regard to its highest scene of operation.

Thus

Thus we can easily conceive that a man may be capable of tracing with great accuracy effects from a cause, or, vice versa, a cause from effects, who is yet wholly disqualified, upon viewing the external beauties of nature, to paint these by certain happy and exquisite strokes of imitations. It does not indeed follow that he who possesseth this imitative talent may not likewise be qualified to exercise that of reasoning justly. But an instance in which it appears that one of these is disjoined from the other, clearly shows that they are essentially different. Now if this is the case, as argumentation carried on properly to accomplish a certain purpose indicates the exercise of reason; so an imitation happily executed can arise only from that power to which we give the name of imagination. But it hath been already shown that to certain imitative beauties we assign the appellation of *original* expressions. It follows therefore that the faculty from which these are derived may be characterised peculiarly by the epithet *inventive*.

Applying

Applying therefore this designation to it, let us enquire what spheres are appropriated to it in the province of Composition. We propose to consider its operations as regarding the images, the incidents, the sentiments, or the characters that occur in the various species of this art. In one or other of the views opened to us by these, it will appear that we contemplate imagination; and we suppose it then only to be predominant in the highest degree, when the separate testimonies of its existence act in vigorous combination.

I. Under the general designation of images, we mean here to comprehend not only those significant allusions by which a particular thought is placed vividly before the mind, but every species of *illustration* by which sentiments either acquire the advantage of being clearly displayed, or of making a forcible and lasting impression. Of these there are two kinds, each of which hath its peculiar importance. The first takes place when an event or action of essential consequence is completely displayed by some significant and appropriated image,

image, drawn from external objects, and pursued through a detail of circumstances. The second kind is constituted when maxims or sentiments of importance are explained by apposite metaphors, or are impressed on the mind by suitable examples. It is principally in the higher branches of poetry that we are to look for the first of these. In epic particularly where *admiration* is almost constantly to be excited by holding up some standard of consummate excellence, it is at the same time necessary, that the principal character should be exposed in a variety of lights; and that every circumstance relating to it should add strength to the passion which ought to rise higher as the author proceeds. This great effect is wholly to be ascribed to the grandeur of those sublime images by which every object is successively exalted. The solemnity with which these are introduced, the circumstantial manner in which they are displayed, and our own propensity to extend our idea of the object until it is equalled with the illustration; these united circumstances operate so powerfully on the mind,

as to suspend as it were the influence of reason. Transactions thus described become in fact so deeply interesting as to awaken in us the same passions that would have seized immediate spectators of the scene *.

In

*. “On ne peut réussir dans le style élevé du genre sublime qu’on ne soit entièrement persuadé que ce style ce forme de choses qu’on a dire des grandes images qu’on s’en fait ; & de l’elevation du genie, plus que de celle de l’expression, de l’éclat de paroles & de cette attirail de periphrases recherchées.” *Rap. Reflex. sur l’Eloq.* tom. ii. p. 37. This sentiment a reader of taste will consider as much more just and noble than that of another critic of the same nation, who seems to consider an exact conformity in every point betwixt the image and the object to be illustrated, as indispensibly necessary at all times to constitute just composition. *Bossu du Poeme Epique*, liv. vi. chap. 3. Here our critic takes a very frigid and defective view of his subject. A great genius, when his mind is filled with sublime conceptions; will not even think of keeping up this rigid conformity, by which he might obtain the praise of correctness, at the expence of being charged with coldness and insipidity. When an illustration at such times corresponds to the object in some remarkable circumstance, we not only allow the writer to throw in others which have no such immediate connection with it, but we consider these as

In every species of didactic composition it is obvious that this style of exalted imagery would be wholly improper, and indeed unnatural. A judicious writer will

the exuberance of an imagination inexhaustible in materials; and shewing that it possesseth a larger proportion of these than necessity requires. Of this kind the reader will meet with many striking examples in the Iliad, the Paradise Lost, and the Gierusalemme Liberata. We may however, observe, that though this free use of the present figure obtains among the most eminent poets, yet it is not meant to affirm that an image *exactly* corresponding to its original will fail, even in this species of composition, of making a forcible and adequate impression. This conformity ought particularly to be studied when several different figures are collected into one group, and the illustration is applied successively to each. When Æneas is described as ascending to the top of his father's house to learn whence arose the tumult in the city, how strongly does the following image set before our eyes the man, the place, and the scene that broke out upon him!

In fegetem veluti cum flamma furentibus austris
Incidit, aut rapidus montano flumine torrens
Sternit agros, sternit fata læta, boumque labores,
Precipitesque trahit sylvas :—stupet inscius alto,
Accipiens sonitum, faxi de vertice pastor.

Æneid. lib. ii.

therefore

therefore have recourse here to the other kind of illustration which consists of employing metaphor or example. It ought to be observed that though the mind willingly submits upon some occasions to the illusion of fancy; yet this only happens when it is thoroughly captivated by a series of interesting events; and rather than lose the pleasure of perusal, we are willing to look upon these (if we may thus express it) as *momentary* realities. This imposition is rendered more or less effectual, as the illustrations participate in a greater or less degree of strength, beauty, and variety. By these means attention is very forcibly arrested by an event otherwise too inconsiderable to have at all attracted it; as observations in the same manner which might have been otherwise overlooked, by being thus powerfully inculcated, become subservient to the purpose of enlarging our knowledge of mankind.

In the province of science, where criticism exerciseth more rigid severity, the inventive power is principally beneficial, when, under the direction of understand-

ing, it suggests a mode of expression so happily and justly metaphorical, as conveys peculiar energy to philosophical disquisition, and placeth historical transactions in the most striking points of view. We must distinguish here betwixt *examples* which refer to a whole series of observation taken together, and metaphors which relate wholly to one part or object in this series. This will be best understood from particular instances. It is the purpose of Cicero in the dialogue entitled the Dream of Scipio, to impress the belief of the immortality of the soul. In order to effectuate this purpose, the great Africanus is introduced as addressing one of his greatest descendents, and at the same time that he mentions the evidence of this truth, as powerfully exemplifying the happiness of the blessed by comparison with the highest enjoyment of mortals. With this view he points to Carthage * the scene of future

* “Ostendebat autem Carthaginem de excelfo et pleno stellarum, illustri et claro quodam loco.” *Somn. Scipion.*

triumph to the person whom he addressed, and acquaints him of happiness incomparably higher than that which may arise from this conquest, to be enjoyed in a future state *. He proceeds to convey an higher idea of this happiness by making it to arise from the contemplation of the UNIVERSE, that *magnificent temple* † (as he nobly calls it) of the Deity; in comparison of which the world itself is a point, and the Roman empire altogether, an almost imperceptible atom!—Every reader must be sensible of the advantage which the philosophical sentiments of this dialogue acquire from being exemplified in so exalted a style of imagery.

Metaphors, or short comparisons as these may be denominated, are applied indeed

* “Sic habeto : omnibus qui patriam conservaverint, adjuverint, auxerint, certum esse in cælo ac definitum locum, ubi beati ævo sempiterno fruuntur. Imo ii vivunt qui ex corporis vinculis tanquam ex carcere evolaverunt : vestra vero quæ dicitur vita, mors est.”
Id. ibid.

† “DEUS IS, cujus templum est *omne hoc quod conspicias.*”

to particular objects, instead of thus illustrating sentiments that stand in connection with each other. Yet their effect when properly applied, is such as every reader possessed of sensibility must feel as highly interesting.—When Socrates, in his last discourse, is laying open the mysteries of his philosophy, he informs his disciples that above the heaven in which the stars are placed, there is another region denominated the æther. The earth we inhabit he represents as a kind of sediment drawn from the other, like those gross particles that fall to the bottom when dust is sprinkled on a fine fluid. We, he observes, who inhabit this gross region are so little sensible of it, that we fancy ourselves to live in the purest one; “in the same manner as persons supposed to inhabit the bottom of the sea might judge that surface through which they see the sun and stars, to be the heavens; and having never been able to raise themselves above it, are ignorant that we inhabit a purer and higher region than theirs, and meet
“ with

“with none to give them information*.”

Here the sentiment of the philosopher is strikingly and aptly conveyed by an image corresponding to one object in every circumstance.

A temperate use of this figure produceth likewise an happy effect in historical narration, where an author of genius is naturally led into it by the recital of some momentous transaction. His imagination catcheth fire from the incident he relates; and while he is studying to clothe it in suitable language, suggests to him an adequate image. Thus describing a mob pre-

* Ημας ουν οικουτας εν τοις κοιλοις αυτης λεληθεναι και οισθαι ανω επι της γης οικειν. Ωσπερ ει τις εν μεσω τω πυθμενι τε πελαγους οικων, οιοιτο τε επι της θαλαττης οικειν, και δια τε υδατος ορων τον ηλιον και τα αλλα αστρα, την θαλατταν ηγοιτο ουρανον ειναι· Δια δε βραδυτητα τε, και ασθενειαν, μηδεπωποτε επι τα ακρα της θαλαττης αφιγμενος, μηδε ευρακως ειη εκδυσ και ανακυψας εκ της θαλαττης εις τον ειθαδε τοπον οσα καθαρωτερος και καλλιων τυγχανει ων τε παρα σφισιν, μηδε αλλε ακηκως ειη τε ευρακοτος. ΠΛΑΤΩΝ. ΦΑΙΔ. κεφ. νη.

cupitate and furious in all its motions, he seizeth the idea of a torrent swelled with the storms of winter*. The array of an army on march somewhat disordered by inequality of motion is with great elegance and propriety compared to the swelling of a billow of the sea†. A prince naturally of good dispositions, but easily thrown into passion, to the ocean serene at times, but apt to be agitated by every breath of wind‡. A historian may even

* Ο θεός τε εμπίστων τὰ πρᾶγματα ἀνευ νοῦ, χειμαρρῶ ποταμῷ ἰκελός. ΗΡΟΔΟΤ. Θάλ.

† ΞΕΝΟΦ. περὶ Κυρ. p. 77.

‡ ΗΡΟΔΟΤ. Εὐτερ. To the metaphors here mentioned we may subjoin, as one of the happiest and most beautiful illustrations that is to be met with, one that is made use of by the celebrated Lucretia Gonzaga to a learned man who complained of his poverty.—“Essendo voi (says she) persona dotta, mi maraviglio che di sì strana maniera vi attristiate per la povertà:—quasi non sappiate la vita dei poveri esser simile ad una navigazione presso il lito; & quella de ricchi non esser differente da coloro, che si ritrovano in mare. A gli uni è facile gittar la fune in terra, & condur la nave a sicuro liogo, & a gli altri e summamente difficile.” Lettres di L. Gonzaga, p. 215.

sometimes

sometimes use the sublime images of poetry, as we shall show afterwards, either when his mind is exalted by the greatness of an event; when he is drawing an illustrious character; or when certain remarkable transactions require to be exhibited with strength and vivacity of colouring. In all these cases it would be useless to attempt proving that it is the faculty of imagination which seizes the illustration, as it is judgment that applies it. Both these facts are admitted on all sides.

II. From contemplating the inventive power as the fountain of beautiful illustration, we are next to consider it as exerting eminent influence in the *invention of incidents*. This last effect we may view as indicating immediately the prevalence of fancy, without whose continued operation we cannot suppose it at any time to take place. It is constituted by no very difficult, but by a very striking effort of this faculty of the mind, calling up either fictitious personages, or such as receive considerable heightening from its *creative pencil*; and adapting to each a series of events,

from

from whose novelty, variety, and importance we commonly judge of the degree in which imagination is conferred. This amusing, ingenious, and enchanting exercise of fancy, forms, though not perhaps the most sublime, yet by far the most various and agreeable lights in which we find it displayed. In following out these, the mind is lost in a kind of ideal labyrinth; in which the same power that suggested the incidents to the author, takes cognizance of these principally, and excites the most pleasing sensations to the person who peruseth his performance.

We shall not, therefore, form an inadequate idea of the invention of incidents, if we consider these as indications of an imagination various, flexible, excursive; capable of considerable extent of comprehension, and possessing a power of working up into the most attractive shapes, materials supplied by experience, and of forming unusual combinations. But we shall be mistaken if we consider this criterion of genius (unless perhaps in some very rare instances) as indicating the greatness,

ness, sublimity, or even exuberance of that power from which it takes its rise. This last observation will appear perhaps extraordinary to many readers at first view; because as there is no characteristic of imagination more obvious to every man than that of contriving a complicated series of events; so, with the bulk of mankind, whatever implies excellence in the only sphere of exertion which they have been accustomed to appropriate to this quality, is naturally supposed to discover its predominance not only in the greatest extent, but in the highest degree. Reflection however will lead us to make a wide distinction between these objects. But in order to render this thoroughly comprehensible it will be necessary to enter into the subject more particularly.

The incidents of any work considered as the immediate offspring of imagination, may be viewed either as means of arresting attention by their variety, novelty, and agreeable arrangement; or as circumstances that upon some occasions astonish and exalt the mind by that grandeur and
sublimity

sublimity of which they are viewed as indications. In the first of these views it is obvious, that if we judge a *great* imagination to be characterised by the complicated incidents that it works into a fable, we shall then be led to admire the authors of the *old romance* much more than these of the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, or *Odyssæy*. For the former have varied their narration with a detail of imminent dangers, fortunate escapes, unexpected interviews, surprising revolutions, successful temerity, and resolute enterprize; to which in the writings of the others (the *Odyssæy* itself not excepted) we meet with nothing of this kind in all respects adequate. Upon the same principle the *Orlando Furioso* might be preferred equally both to the one and other, distinguished as it is by so amazing a series of stupendous events, that the mind is lost among them as in a labyrinth, and cannot disentangle the parts of so complicated a plan.

It will serve however to convince us that no very eminent share of imagination is required to effectuate this purpose if

we

we reflect that a comparison of the works formerly mentioned with the *Iliad*, &c. will induce us to judge either that their authors possessed but an inferior proportion of imagination, or that the irregularity with which it appears to have operated, is wholly unaccountable and extraordinary. For if we lay it down as a principle, that the invention of incidents is always the criterion of a vigorous imagination, it will then follow, that a faculty which is deemed equal at one time to the accomplishment of a noble and interesting purpose, ought likewise to be equal to another arising from the same cause; and demanding it is supposed an exertion no higher than the former. Should we judge therefore the invention of characters to demand no greater effort of the faculty above-mentioned than is displayed in the present case; we may naturally ask by what means it happens, that authors who have attained so high a degree of excellence in one of these spheres, are yet so deficient in the other? for amidst all that variety of events by which the works that exhibit marks of
this

this invention are separately characterised, the reader, who may expect to meet with a corresponding variety of qualities in the minds and deportment of the principal personages, will be surpris'd to find evidences in this point of view of barren invention, defective arrangement, and upon the whole of an insipid and disgusting uniformity. The numerous instances which we meet with in these works, because they indicate always the existence of imagination, are upon a superficial view supposed to determine its extent. But however beautiful in themselves, yet the illusion subsides when they are contemplated in this last light, and we perceive the weight that ought to be laid upon them.

In the same manner it must be obvious that if the variety of events that may take place in a work, are no indications of a great, they are as little to be regarded as the marks of an exuberant imagination. The last mentioned quality is said to characterise this power of the mind when it is observed to throw out a profusion of images; to clothe its objects in the most luxuriant

luxuriant drapery; when in short, not satisfied with what is merely proper and expedient, it adds likewise whatever is supposed to be beautiful and ornamental.

However, very little attention will serve to convince us that the talent of colouring Composition is wholly distinct from that of inventing incidents; and that though few men possess the former, who are not likewise capable of exercising the latter of these, yet the exertion of this last by no means implies a power in the person whom it distinguisheth, of displaying the other to equal advantage. Thus will it be said that, in the works formerly mentioned where we meet with a series of stupendous and astonishing events; those picturesque images are introduced which place the various scenes in succession before the very eye of the spectator*? Are the
events

* It is not meant that these remarks should be applied either to the *Orlando Furioso*, or to Spencer's noble allegorical poem, in both of which the description is almost as diversified as the events:—it is only intended to evince, from taking a view of works distinguished

events even when supposed to be such as might arrest the attention of a judicious reader, as these described, or does the author who invents, appear able to paint them with that rich, vivid, and expressive colouring, which confers importance on the most trivial circumstances, and excites admiration by something wholly independent of any transaction, as the mind is taught to feel this passion when a sensation entirely opposite must have been raised even by correct and chastised compositions *? Do we observe, in short, that the power of multiplying and diversifying events is naturally characteristical of that which throws out a blaze of imagery, and

guished only by numerous incidents, that the degree of imagination required to effectuate this purpose is not so eminent as is usually supposed; and to assign an author in whom this excellence is principally conspicuous, his proper rank in the scale of genius.

* “Tum est Hyperbole virtus, cum res ipsa de qua loquendum est, naturalem modum excessit. Conceditur enim amplius dicere, quia dici quantum est non potest: meliusque ultra quam citra stat oratio.” Quintil. lib. viii. cap. 6.

riots in luxurious ornament; or do we associate with this idea, that likewise of a person,

Qui irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet

Ut Magus, & modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis?

After all however it is not our design to insinuate that the species of invention last mentioned is never to be regarded as the criterion of fertile and copious imagination *. Our observations on this subject regard rather the nature of those objects which this faculty delights to contemplate, than the degree in which (excluding this last consideration) it may be acknowledged to subsist. The truth is, our judgment of the genius of a writer depends wholly upon the principle we lay down as the most essential test of this uncommon character. If a display of various

* Εἰς δὲ οὐ το σπῶσεν (says Longinus speaking of the adjurations of Demosthenes) τί ὁμοσαι μέγα, το δὲ πῶς καὶ πῶς, καὶ ἐφ' ὧν καιρῶν, καὶ τίνος ἐνεκα. Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ μὲν οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ ὀρκῆς, καὶ πρὸς εὐτυχῆντας ἐτι, καὶ ἔδεομένους παρηγορίας τῆς Ἀθηναίας. ΤΜΗΜ. 15.

and complicated events is viewed as the evidence of original invention, a judgment will be formed of the imagination from which these were derived, either as a reader may be directed by the nature of the incidents, or from their diversified combinations perceived to take place. If on the other hand we consider the greatness and luxuriance of this faculty as indicated by the novelty and grandeur of those illustrations, sentiments, or characters which may pass before the mind as a subject may require any one of these alternately to prevail:—in that case, the former species of invention will suggest the idea of versatility rather than elevation of fancy; and even an incident comparatively great and interesting will rarely be considered without the concurring circumstance of exalted imagery, as the certain characteristic of a sublime imagination.

In order to render this remark more thoroughly comprehended,—let it be observed,—that in estimating the greatness of any event whatever (contemplated in the present point of view) we must overlook

look the natural advantages or disadvantages of the persons by whose ministration it is supposed to be effectuated. By *natural* advantages, &c. I understand those qualities which we are apt invariably to associate with a certain order of beings, as superior strength, magnitude, velocity, perseverance, whose existence and combination being wholly independent of the author, cannot reasonably be supposed to give him additional merit. Thus Milton arming his celestial combatants with the mountains; and Homer placing in the hands of his human heroes broken rocks, stones of enormous size, shields and spears proportioned to their prowess; and even clothing them from the armoury of Vulcan;—those two great geniuses are with regard to these circumstances on a level with each other. The comparative extent and fertility of their invention must be estimated from proofs more immediately expressive of an imagination able to explore the latent sources of wonder, and to astonish the mind with great and unexpected combinations.—Taking this truth there-

fore for granted, it will follow that as an author can justly lay claim to no great merit as an inventor from the superiority of his persons, so the events that arise from this circumstance, considered as adapted to it with justness and propriety, are proofs indeed of accuracy and clear understanding, but not of exuberance or sublimity of imagination. In this last point of view there is indeed a kind of presumptive evidence that he who at the same time selects the most dignified personages, and employs these in transactions proportioned to their greatness, possesseth himself an imagination fitted to take in exalted and sublime ideas. But this very presumption is a decisive proof that the events themselves, however extraordinary, carry no conviction along with them as to this matter; since after having heard these recited, our judgment is still suspended, until we observe the manner in which a work is executed. Thus let us suppose that we had been informed of the combat of Michael and Satan, in the *Paradise Lost*, without knowing at the same time that
style

style of exalted imagery, and those circumstances expressive of divine genius that are wrought into the description. Was a stranger told more particularly that the author of this work described an engagement betwixt beings of a superior order; carried on sometimes by the conflux of hosts encountering in the air, sometimes by the combat of their leaders opposed to each other which suspended the action; let us judge him to be informed that the prize for whose possession these combatants fought, was as far beyond the reach of man's ambition, as the persons themselves exceeded him in strength and capacity; and finally, that the action terminated by the descent of the Almighty, and by a punishment inflicted on his enemies befitting omnipotence; it is obvious that the evidence of the author's genius arising from this account would be at most presumptive and conjectural.—In order to be thoroughly convinced whether he possessed an imagination adequate to so great a subject, we would immediately have recourse to the work itself, and take in the circum-

stances formerly suggested. When we come to examine it in this point of view, our attention is called off from the incidents to the characters, the sentiments, and the splendor of the imagery. In these lights, when before the commencement of the battle we meet with such a stroke as the following :

High in the midst, exalted as a God
 Th' apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat ;
 Idol of majesty divine ; inclosed
 With flaming cherubim and golden shields ;
 Then lighted from his gorgeous throne ; for now
 'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left
 A dreadful interval !

or when we behold this great arch-angel
 recoiling from the stroke of Abdiel

— — — as if on earth
 Winds under ground, or waters forcing way,
 Sidelong had push'd a mountain from his seat,
 Half sunk with all his pines !

perhaps these, and a few other strokes of the same kind would convey to a real judge of poetic Composition a truer idea of the genius of Milton, than a simple narration of all the incidents (various and noble as these are) of this divine performance.

From

From the whole then we may conclude, that a numerous and diversified series of incidents is always an evidence of a flexible and excursive, commonly of a copious and comprehensive imagination; and that in some instances it affords the highest presumption that this faculty is at the same time sublime and exuberant. It forms likewise by far the most various and agreeable exercise of this faculty; so agreeable indeed, that even its wildest and most irregular excursions afford an entertainment from which we never rise disgusted or fatiated. When the rules of credibility are once wholly violated, an author must either give the utmost disgust to his readers, or he ought to set no bounds to the excursions of fancy. This last circumstance it is which gives such high merit of one kind to those delightful tales which go under the name of Arabian Night's Entertainments. The mind in perusing these is enchanted with the wild and variegated succession of objects ever new, and dwells upon these with that kind of pleasure which it receives from a dream where many pleas-

ing illusions are floating perpetually before the imagination. In this case we permit ourselves willingly to be imposed upon, and rather than lose the pleasure of viewing such beautiful machinery as the sylphs in the Rape of the Lock, or such sublime beings as the Mohammedan Genii, we are contented to assign both a momentary existence.—But when actions wholly beyond the power of man are ascribed to a merely human agent (as in those monstrous collections of absurdities entitled, Clelia, Cleopatra, Cassandra, &c.) and that in so serious a manner as if these were real, we reject the imposture with indignation, and consider the attempt as an insult on the understanding.

III. Having thus taken a view of imagination as the source of beautiful imagery and of diversified incidents in the various species of Composition, this power falls next under our consideration as throwing out new and ingenious sentiment.—Sentiment! (will some reader exclaim) of what sentiment is imagination the parent?—This important province is considered as
occupied

occupied wholly by the understanding. We have already observed that the power here contemplated ought always to be viewed either as acting in direct suberviency to that of reason, or at least as united with some share of it. That sentiments in order to have either propriety or connection with each other, must be such as the understanding hath approved, is a truth which no man will call in question. Of those however, there are some which in consequence of indicating a certain wildness which we consider as a criterion of imagination; of being thrown out with promptitude rather than with accuracy; of being placed in loose arrangement; of presenting in short, upon the whole, ideas which the mind rather contemplates as brilliant, with a transient satisfaction, than dwells on as just with fixed attention;—we ascribe originally to that power whose various offices we here enumerate.

As thoughts that have a kind of wild originality derived from fancy, a man of reflection will consider many of those ingenious conjectures in philosophy which
will

will not stand the test of a close examination. Sentiments of the other kinds are such as we meet with most commonly either in superficial sketches of a subject not brought to perfection; or in those loose pieces in which ideas are carelessly expressed as they occur, and methodised arrangement is professedly set aside. When we consider Plato's account of the origin of rivers, fountains, &c. from a capacious reservoir in the bowels of the earth, we admire the sublime genius of the philosopher, but are sensible that this notion had its origin in his imagination. We have already shewn that a close attention to method often takes place even in those fallies of wit and humour in which it is at first view least perceptible. When this is the case, we acknowledge the whole conduct to have mastery. There are, however, pieces that please upon the whole as imitations of nature, in which a lively fancy appears to have delineated objects just as they occurred, and to have coloured so highly thoughts that indicate quickness rather than depth of conception, as to
merit

merit the appellation of having originally suggested them.

These we must observe with very little attention to be the peculiar and immediate provinces of imagination; which, instead of proceeding by slow and deliberate gradations in its process, making every step in the scale of evidence lead naturally to another, is characterised by its combination of dissimilar ideas, associated from points of resemblance extremely remote, but whose union, when once formed, is by this very circumstance rendered striking and uncommon. In the series of thoughts, however, arising in this manner from various exertions of the inventive faculty, some will no doubt appear to have been immediately derived from the different external forms of nature. Others on the contrary, wholly subordinate to, and incidentally rising as it were from the former, will grow out from the principal subject, which like a vigorous plant will thus appear surrounded with shoots, which shew the native strength and fertility of the root from which they sprung. Of these, the
former

former constitute a vein of sentiment purely original, and require a very large proportion of what is denominated plastic or creative imagination:—the latter are only to be considered as the consequences of being thrown into a certain track, in which when a man of no uncommon genius is once set out, he may either improve upon, or add to the discovery of the original inventor.

In whatever light, however, we view imagination as the parent of new and ingenious sentiment, it must be acknowledged extremely hazardous to submit to its guidance in this delicate exertion. The province of imagery and that of incidents is indeed naturally occupied by this power, because we know no other adequate to invention in either.—But in the sphere of sentiment, the qualities which formerly rendered fancy an agreeable and entertaining companion, become the immediate causes of our distrust and suspicion. Thus its vivacity will lead us to be diffident of the clearness and comprehension of its theory; its versatility, of the justness and symmetry

symmetry of its proportions; its power of seizing remote points of resemblance will induce us to call in question the accuracy of imitation; and the unusual combinations which it presents to the mind will very naturally infuse a suspicion of their solidity and truth. Coherence and proportion are never to be regarded as the native offspring of imagination. This faculty will indeed invent in any branch of science whatever; but without the superintendence of the former, its discoveries will consist of loose and unsupported assertions, uncommon perhaps, and striking at first view; but which being placed in no just connection, and forming no links in the chain of progressive evidence, afford not any solid improvement to the mind, and are recollected only for their brilliance and novelty. The mind likewise under this direction is wholly inadequate to the task of examining its decisions with coolness and leisure; and mistaking some distant resemblance of truth for the object of which it is in pursuit, it is satisfied with a cursory

curfory view, and is called off immediately by some newer prospect.

Upon the whole, therefore, in this sphere of imagination it will appear necessary beyond any other, that this power be kept within the closest limitations; as a foundation wrong-laid, or formed of improper materials, will render a structure however beautiful to the eye, yet defective in strength, solidity, and duration. Thus even where the judgment of an author is comprehensive and penetrating, it may yet be employed by the former to support a whimsical and extravagant hypothesis. In this case indeed it will be no difficult matter to distinguish the spheres of each; and at the same time that we admire the romantic theory of fancy, we may contemplate with wonder the acuteness and subtilty of that judgment which can support it by subtle distinctions and the most plausible arguments. A work of this kind will however be viewed by the discerning judge only as a splendid monument of human weakness; and as a proof of the many
errors

errors into which a man will be led by endeavouring to render that convincing to the reason of others, which had its origin from a different faculty in himself. No work therefore will ever be valuable in point of sentiment, unless when the imagination of the writer acts in immediate subserviency to his understanding, which reviews its various objects, and selects such as have fitness for a certain end from the promiscuous assemblage. Thus it will happen that the tendency of these when duly estimated will be, to extend the reader's knowledge of his subject, rather than amuse him by striking on his fancy; and that the whole will evince that sagacity and good sense which is the parent of accuracy, perspicuity, and proportion.

IV. From the preceding remarks on the spheres and operations of fancy in the present subject, its importance in Composition will, we presume, be sufficiently conspicuous, and its modes of exertion will become in some degree familiar to the mind. Of these however (various as they are) the highest and most difficult remains to be considered

considered as discovered in the higher species of Composition in the invention of characters. As we have already seen in the course of our observations, that the other indications of this faculty may appear in a considerable measure, where this last is either wholly wanting, or extremely deficient; and as experience must convince us that the introduction of characters distinguished by strokes of originality, and supported with dignity through a complicated series of events; that this is one of the rarest efforts of genius, and such as requires the greatest proportion of intellectual qualities *; it will be no incurious
research

* The truth of these remarks will be fully evinced, if we consider only the various circumstances to which an author must attend in order to render his characters such as may acquire approbation from the more judicious or discerning. These are so justly ranged, in the following passage, by an author who was well acquainted with human nature, that nothing farther needs to be added on this part of the subject.

“Natio: (primo exsequenda est) nam & gentibus proprii mores sunt; nec idem in Barbaro, Romano, Græco probabile est. Patria: quia similiter etiam civitatum
leges,

research to examine the cause which renders this invention particularly difficult, and which leads a reader of discernment to value it so highly where it is found upon examination to take place.

In that species of invention which ariseth as we have already seen from known objects placed in striking and unusual combinations, it will be acknowledged, that the easiest task is performed by that person whose excellence lies in having selected from the variety of external ones those which have perhaps escaped the attention of former imitators. The most arduous is assigned to him, who surveying ideas purely intellectual, and to whose discovery or arrangement the senses cannot be supposed

leges, instituta, opiniones habent differentiam. Sexus: ut latrocinium facilius in viro, veneficium in sœmina credas. Ætas: quia aliud aliis annis magis convenit. Educatio & disciplina: quoniam refert a quibus & quo quisque modo institutus. Habitus corporis: ducitur enim frequenter in argumentum species libidinis, robur petulantix, his contraria in diversum. Fortuna: nec enim idem credibile est in divite aut paupere propinquis, amicis, clientibus abundant & his omnibus destituto, &c." Institut. lib. v. cap. 10.

at all to contribute, is yet able to form such various, just, and animated expressions; to accomplish such new and happy exhibitions of nature as result from the union of experience and discernment. In the first case, an author has indeed the merit of rendering a prospect peculiarly pleasing by placing at proper intervals objects calculated to excite at the same time pleasure by their beauty, and wonder by their novelty. This merit, however, is considerably lessened, when we reflect that the materials of which the whole is compounded lie open to the senses. Imagination therefore, when employed to cull out amidst an exhaustless variety, such forms as have been passed over without observation, acts the same part as he who by a peculiar quickness of external perception, even without the aid of experience, should observe in a collection of diamonds a few of the purest water, and select these for his own use; after the whole had undergone the severest scrutiny, and every jewel of real value was deemed to have become a successive object of admiration. Here therefore

therefore we ascribe to the inventive faculty quickness and energy; we are struck with the acuteness and novelty of its perceptions. But employed as we still suppose it to be in the selection of objects which have an independent original; or in the imitation of beauties which it cannot improve; we consider it upon the whole as possessing only a kind of secondary originality; and its work as the successful display of an elegant landscape.

When from this view of imagination in the former case, where it works upon materials laid before it, we pass to the latter, where these in consequence of their nature and distance are collected at least with greater difficulty, and the mind is agreeably flattered with the thought of raising in some sense a new creation;—when we contemplate this exertion of fancy, the prospect assumes a very different appearance. The mind instead of taking cognizance only of external objects, is employed to combine remote and abstracted ideas, independent of it indeed with regard to their original existence, but which are

placed in a point of view wholly extraordinary, and whose union forms altogether an object never formerly perceived. While the one therefore only imitates beauties presented to him by sensation, the other by a strenuous effort of reflection placing the radical qualities by which man is distinguished in an uncommon light, becomes properly the inventor or maker of a new character. He exceeds therefore the other in the same proportion as the painter, who by throwing innumerable animated and diversified expressions into the faces of an audience, suggests the full meaning, action, and vehemence of the orator; would be admitted to excell him whose merit lay in discerning and copying a caricatura *.

It

* That we may not be judged from the comparison stated here, to have magnified one effort of imagination at the expence of detracting from another in which the energy and extent of that faculty are extremely conspicuous; it may be proper to observe, that, by copying a caricatura, it is not meant to represent the objects of descriptive Composition as in general either mean in themselves, or as indicating when pourtrayed with accuracy and elegance, a scanty proportion of the inventive

It will be said perhaps, in answer to these observations on the invention of characters,

inventive faculty. It is only intended to show this in its proper light, when set in opposition to that species of invention by which genius appears to be principally characterised. That authors of the first class occupy however, a very high rank in the style of genius is by no means denied, and will indeed be obvious to any person who has taste to discern the refined and exquisite beauties of description, and a sufficient share of imagination himself to judge of the exertion by which these in most instances are selected and portrayed. The ingenious author of the *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, has pointed out some strokes of this kind in Thomson's *Seasons* which are in themselves truly original, and have escaped the notice of former critics. Sect. ii. p. 42, &c. I know no writer indeed who in a work professedly descriptive has equalled in all respects this amiable poet. Theocritus indeed, at first view, may appear to stand in competition with him, but the merit of the Greek upon nearer inspection will appear to be inferior to that of the British poet. In the *Idylliums* of the former it will be observed that there is little descriptive beauty of the kind here referred to. The principal merit of these enchanting poems consists in their peculiar tenderness of sentiment, and of an exquisite and inimitable simplicity of expression. This simplicity as it seems to be incompatible with strength or variety of epithet, excludes indeed naturally picturesque and in-

acters, that we have not only in a preceding part of this work attempted to
 prove

tensely animated Composition. Accordingly we rarely find Theocritus adopting the epithetical style; and when he does so his epithets are the simplest imaginable. He generally gives every rural object its common designation, and hence ariseth that unaffected ease which as the genuine language of nature is so universally interesting.

Ω Λυκοι, ω θωες, ω αν ορεα φωλαδες αρκτοι
 Χαιρεθ', ω βωκολος υμμιν εγω Δαφνις εκ' ετ' αν υλαν
 Ουκετ' αν αδρυμως, εκ αλσεα· Χαιρ' Αρεθουσα,
 Και ποταμοι τοι χειτε καλον κατα θυμβριδος υδωρ.

ΘΕΟΚ. ΘΥΡ.

In the Seasons of Thomson we meet with examples of both species of the beauty here referred to, along with others which the Sicilian bard appears not to have been capable of rivaling. That union of simplicity and tenderness, which forms so enchanting a combination, the reader will discover in the pathetic tale of Amelia and Celadon, as instances of rich and exquisite painting are universally to be met with. This amiable and judicious poet is distinguished likewise eminently by one excellence which I have not observed to be ascribed to him in the high degree he seems to deserve. I mean that of improving the most trivial circumstance by instructive and appropriated illustrations. To adduce but one example:—how just and expressive is the following image, when after having described

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prove that imitation in some sense extends to the whole compass of human investigation; but this representation of character proceeds in most cases obviously from the principle above-mentioned, as it implies only the power in an author of copying successfully those characters with which experience and observation have rendered him conversant.

Admitting the truth of both these remarks, it ought still however to be remembered, that in the first case where a character is marked with strokes of originality, and strikes us, upon the whole, rather in

the birds as conveying "the most delicious morsel to their young," the poet immediately says

————— Even so a gentle pair,
By fortune sunk, but form'd of generous mould,
In some lone cott amidst the distant woods,
Sustain'd alone by providential Heaven,
Oft' as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites and give them all.

We shall conclude this long note by observing that descriptive poetry in such instances as these, assumes indeed a dignified aspect, and indicates in the writer an high share of the most valuable qualities both intellectual and moral, that are conferred on mankind.

the light of what may be supposed to take place, than of what we have had occasion to witness as actually existing; in this case we have already seen the term invention to be applied with particular propriety. In the other, where the imitation is more perceptible, we must yet acknowledge it from the refined and abstracted nature of the objects imitated, to demand an exertion of which an imagination able to strike off exact resemblances in the field of external beauties, might be deemed incapable.

Great, however, and comprehensive as we must suppose an imagination to be, that is adequate in most instances to the invention of characters, reflection will yet lead us to distinguish the degrees in which this faculty takes place, as indicated by the following circumstances: by the various qualities that enter into a character; by the discriminating strokes that serve to give it strength and peculiarity; and by its grandeur as arising from native greatness and sublimity of genius.

These indications we shall here consider separately, in order to have a full view of
of

of the province of this power in Composition.

1. With regard to the first mentioned, the qualities that enter into a character, it will be acknowledged that the Ulysses of Homer, distinguished by so various an assemblage of striking qualifications, sets the inventive powers of this writer in a much stronger light than either his Nestor or Diomed, whose characters are more uniform. These last, however, taken in with the former, fill us with the highest admiration of a mind capable of varying this assemblage so much, and of comprehending the parts of so complicated a detail. It is indeed a task incomparably more difficult to exhibit a variety of distinct qualifications as combined to form one character, than to parcel these out as it were among many persons, and to assign each a separate virtue or vice which along with a few common and subordinate acquirements complete the exhibition.

When a very various assemblage of qualities meet in one character, each must receive different expressions according to those

those with which it is united, while at the same time the distinguishing marks must be uniformly maintained by which it ought on all occasions to be known. When, on the other hand, only a few are brought together, many of these expressions are necessarily lost, such of them in particular as arise from the union of one qualification with others that are dissimilar to it. The office therefore that is assigned to imagination, when a prevailing quality is exhibited only in few lights, even though strong and picturesque, is deemed with great justice inferior to that which it exerciseth when the same quality, whether moral or intellectual, is placed before the mind in many different views, as it receives a cast from intricate, striking, and unusual combinations.

In the portrait of Ulysses that wisdom which forms his distinguishing characteristic, is happily exposed in so many points of view arising from other virtues, or even imperfections which it calls out to observation, as will serve to illustrate fully the preceding remarks.—Thus when joined with

with just and glowing indignation it prompts him to chastise vice or insolence (as in the punishment of Therfites in the Iliad, or of the suitors in the Odyfsey) with a severity unexpected perhaps, and suddenly exerted, but which appears upon examination to have been the effect of thought, and adapted properly to the occasion *. When co-operating with heroic fortitude and the love of his country, it becomes in the last exigence a principle by which he is induced to place himself in the breach against a victorious enemy †, all other expedients having proved ineffectual ‡. Animated by zeal in a critical moment, it produceth the most active and vigorous measures §. In dangerous circumstances, on the contrary, it is cool, considerate, and fruitful of resources ¶. When joined with ambition, it is eloquent and insinuating ||, intrepid and resolute; the same

* ΙΑΙΑΔ β. ΟΔΥΣ. χ.

† Id.

‡ ΙΑΙΑΔ. λ. 401, &c.

§ Id. β. 265.

¶ See his night-adventure with Diomed ΙΑΙΑΔ. κ. 240, & seq.

|| See his speech to Achilles. ΙΑΙΑΔ. Γ. 225, &c.

power which suggests at one time the most prudent councils *, permitting at another the noblest emulation †.—In fine, amidst all this variety of passions, temptations, and dangerous enterprizes, instead of being sometimes dropt as might naturally be expected, or of acting frequently by interrupted exertions, it is a consistent and operating principle, assuming the direction upon every occasion, and appearing most conspicuous in those situations where from the passions of human nature it was most difficult to be preserved.—In the two characters of Nestor and Diomed, distinguished as both are by the same predominant quality, it is placed, however, in lights extremely different both from that of Ulysses, and from each other. The wisdom of the former is principally the result of experience in an old man, endowed naturally with sagacity and penetration; as that of the latter is the result of early reflection in a young warrior, who, unaided himself by experience, has still docility enough to re-

* IΛΙΑΔ. λ. 312. γ. 154. 215.

† Id. η. 168. ψ. 755, &c.

ceive instruction from a sage with whom, notwithstanding the disparity of years, a general similitude of disposition establisheth an intercourse of good offices *.

* The friendship that is observed on every occasion to take place betwixt Nestor and Diomed, discovers at the same time the judgment of Homer, and his extensive knowledge of the human heart. The last mentioned might be supposed at first view rather to have made choice of Ulysses, whom he appears indeed to treat upon all occasions with particular respect. But besides that these last might be considered as rivals, a character which necessarily excludes any great degree of intimacy, the general similitude which takes place betwixt Nestor and Diomed renders their mutual friendship perfectly natural. Nestor possesseth that calm and considerate valour which appears always to have been regulated by prudence, and which is now moderated by a very considerable share of experience. Diomed with both the former of those qualities, is from his early youth deficient in the latter; and applies to the sage whom he reverenceth as a father, to have this defect compensated. This affection will likewise appear to be still more natural, if we consider it as bestowed on a person who possessed great benignity and sweetness of disposition. Thus the eloquence of Nestor is particularly characterised as distinguished by the milder and more insinuating graces.

τοῖσι δὲ Νέστωρ

Ἡδυπένης ἀνορούσε, λίγυς Πυλίων ἀγορητής

Τοῦ καὶ ἀπο γλώσσης μελίτος γλυκίων ῥέειν αὐδή.

ΙΛΙΑΔ. α.

It

It may indeed be observed, with the strictest truth, that in the whole conduct of this perplexing detail an eminent share of judgment is indispensibly requisite, as well as a vigorous and extensive imagination. That the last of these however is principally conspicuous in it will be acknowledged when we reflect that its peculiar province, as hath been already evinced, is to give that air of originality to any performance which results from a new and various assemblage of objects; and in proportion as these are singular in their kind, or diversified in their situation, are we naturally induced to consider that genius as creative and exuberant which gave birth to so many agreeable and interesting circumstances.—In this process the power of invention is particularly distinguished as taking an enlarged and extensive range in the field of speculation; as associating ideas drawn from the most remote resources; and as astonishing the mind by the variety, beauty, and perpetual novelty of its materials. To reason the difficult task is assigned of preserving coherence and symmetry

metry betwixt the separate members of the piece amidst a diversity of objects constantly fluctuating, and therefore demanding the united efforts of discernment, experience, and attention.

2. These remarks on imagination as discovered in the invention and conduct of a complicated character, will enable us to form some idea of that degree of it which is necessary to give the persons lively, peculiar, and discriminating features. As therefore, in the province already pointed out, the inventive power is required to possess extent and comprehension, so in the present we consider as displayed to the greatest advantage its vigour and energy. A strong and vivid imagination is known as certainly by this criterion, as a sight uncommonly piercing and vigorous is distinguished by its clear, and accurate perception of external objects, either delicate in their structure, or requiring from their position an organization peculiarly excellent. In characters, as in every other species of inventive exertion, there are certain marks, by whose aid, even when these are

recom-

mended by novelty and supported with judgment, we may yet discover the radical strength or imbecility of the power from which they derived their origin. Thus in the other spheres of this faculty its coldness and debility are supposed to be indicated by a certain languor of expression much more easy to be felt than described, by sparing and feeble illustrations; by faint and inadequate colouring; and, finally, by so obvious a defect in the picturesque and animated as leaves us at no loss to distinguish the cause from which these proceed. This debility likewise becomes always most conspicuous when the author attempts to excel in the higher species of Composition. Some degree of discernment may perhaps be deemed necessary to discover it in the more simple branches of this art; because where strength and energy are not considered as indispensibly requisite, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish that execution which a subject naturally demands from that which is the consequence of a defective imagination. But when some strenuous effort is required, and when the mind
sinks

sinks under the greatness of its subject, even a common observer becomes sensible of the defect, and can judge of the inequality betwixt the theme and the ability of the writer. A number of characters therefore, in the same manner as images, in which we find no great variety of qualities, and the greater number common, or but little discriminated from each other, may be contemplated as marks of an imagination inadequate to this high strain of invention, even when in other respects it is capable at once of enlarged comprehension, and of vigorous exertion*.

As

* It would, no doubt, be deemed temerity to apply this observation to one of the greatest geniuses of antiquity, who has otherwise so nobly occupied the highest sphere of human excellence; I mean the divine author of the *Æneid*; did not the testimony of some excellent critics concur with proofs that arise from the poem itself compared with the *Iliad*, to show its justice and propriety. Those have with great truth remarked, that in his *fidus Achates*, his *fortis Gias*, *fortisque Cloanthus*, his *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, whose adventure is so obviously copied from Homer, and whose characters are so little distinguished by strokes of originality: and finally, that his *Æneas* himself, a calm and moderate

As a strong imagination therefore will give to its characters significance and peculiarity, so we may estimate in a great measure, the degree of its strength from the nature of that theme, or action, which it is employed to celebrate. Thus we have seldom reason to expect that a man of cool and temperate fancy will make choice of a subject demanding not merely the temporary, but almost invariable prevalence of qualities, in which he must feel himself (comparatively at least) to be deficient. Even supposing him from the partiality of mankind in circumstances of this nature, not to be sensible of this defect, yet the choice of such a man will fall much more naturally upon a general subject (such as that of the *Æneid* or Phar-

hero, brave indeed, pious and intrepid; but indicating from those very qualities an imagination more chaste and temperate, than the fierce, the impetuous, the implacable Achilles; our critics have remarked, that these are all indications of an invention unequal to this high rank of excellence, and defective in that vigour with regard to peculiarity of character, which however is displayed so eminently in the narration, expression, and colouring of his work.

falia),

salia), great perhaps, and comprehensive, with whose magnificence the mind is elevated and dilated, than merely upon the effects of one particular passion, and that too the most impetuous and ungovernable of all that actuate the human mind. In this last case it must be obvious that the first proposal of such a theme would suggest to us the idea of an imagination rapid, glowing, and intensely spirited from the consideration of those fallies abrupt and animated to which this passion must necessarily give rise, and of that dark but expressive colour, which must naturally tincture and predominate in the character.

Contemplated in the present point of view, the author of the *Iliad* will be found to excel all other uninspired writers as much in the strength of those signatures which distinguish his persons, as in the splendor, richness, and beauty of his illustrations. His subject is precisely of that kind which a daring imagination could alone have adopted. He breaks into it likewise with an abruptness suited to the theme, and with one stroke of his creative

pencil gives the outlines of an hero unbridled, furious, implacable, resentful, in whom those distinguishing qualities are afterwards called out, and are so strongly marked in the detail of his conduct.

MHNIN αειδε θεα Πηληϊάδεω Αχιλλῆος

“ Sing (says he) O goddess, the wrath
“ of Achilles the son of Peleus.”—The Roman poet, whose imagination in consequence of its equability was more fitted to take a comprehensive survey of various objects, but less to discriminate these from each other by vigour and energy, opens his subject with a detail of circumstances, which, however noble and interesting in themselves, yet strike not the mind so forcibly when taken together, as the single stroke of his inimitable rival *.

Arma

* The remark made in the text on the invention of Homer, as displayed in the strength of his ideas, and in the masterly stroke by which his personages are marked and introduced, will impress the mind more strongly when we compare the introduction of the Odyssey with that of the Iliad, as expressive of his own character in the various periods of life. As in the latter, when his genius was in its full maturity and vigour,

Arma virumque cano. Trojæ qui primus ab oris
Italiam fato profugus, Lavinaque venit.
Littora, &c.

It were easy to evince by a variety of examples drawn from the highest standards of poetic Composition, both ancient and modern *, the manner in which a genius distinguished by the characteristic above-mentioned will display it in the various pourtrait of manners. The reader, however, by carrying the preceding observations along with him will be able to judge for himself in this matter, a fuller discussion of which belongs more properly to a subsequent section.

3. From the consideration of an extensive and vigorous invention as displayed in the various ingredients, and in the dis-

vigour, we find him breaking abruptly into his subject, and choosing the most various and difficult imaginable; so in the former when the fire of his imagination must have subsided with age, we find his hero described as recollected and moderate, and the bard entering coolly into the detail of circumstances when he proposes his theme.

* Ανδρα μοι εννιπε Μουσα πολυτροπον, ος μαλα πολλα
Πλαγθη.

criminating strokes of a character, we are led naturally to view it in this enlarged sphere of its operation as exhibiting evidences of greatness and sublimity. These we suppose always to be indicated when some personage of superior merit is introduced either as a principal or subordinate actor in the piece, and when amidst many critical, important, and unexpected incidents, we find the native dignity so invariably supported, as that without difficulty we can from the circumstances in which the person is placed, form an idea of the manner in which his actions will be regulated. We must here, however, make a distinction betwixt comprehension and sublimity of genius as discovered in this conduct, since the former of these is principally conspicuous in the nature of the subject *,
whereas

* It is necessary to observe here, that this view of a comprehensive subject as indicating in some branches of Composition a great imagination, ought by no means to be confounded with what hath been advanced in a former part of this section on the invention of incidents. It was observed that these last however great

whereas the latter wholly relates to some individual as the person to whom all is referred. Thus in the *Paradise Lost* it is obvious that the first proposal of a subject comprehending heaven, hell, the chaos, and origin of all things; a state of nature altogether different from the present, and objects in the same manner distinguished from those with which we are conversant, that the proposal of this subject must fill our minds with the idea of a genius capable of taking in an uncommon compass of thought, and great in proportion to the abstracted nature of those objects it was

or extraordinary afford no certain characteristic of a *sublime* imagination, unless when something exalted appears likewise either in the sentiment or imagery. When we observe a series of these extremely complicated to be disposed in exact order, and to follow each other so naturally as to give uniformity and consistency to a fable, we judge with propriety the understanding of the author to be accurate, and his imagination comprehensive.—But to constitute a *great* display of genius, each of these taken separately must have some proportion of grandeur in order to form one noble and magnificent whole. In this case, the comprehensive nature of the subject may be said to denominate not only an extensive, but a great imagination.

employed to contemplate. The character of sublimity, on the other hand, ariseth principally from the deportment and conduct of certain distinguished personages.

In general it may be observed on this branch of the subject, that nothing contributes more to fix the denomination of sublimity upon a work, than when a great mind is represented as rising superior to the shocks of adversity. In circumstances invariably prosperous, or even chequered sometimes with the shade of affliction, it is difficult to support this designation with propriety, which seems to require constantly that the sympathetic feelings of human nature should be awakened, and that the mind should be able to form some comparison betwixt the past and the present, and dwell on both with a solemn and melancholy pleasure. This circumstance it is which confers such peculiar dignity on the Satan of Milton, who is therefore represented by a rival poet as the hero of his work. When we contemplate this august personage as maintaining a steady and unshaken fortitude in a situation of

all

all others the most ruinous, where even

———— Hope never comes,

That comes to all:

when we behold him coasting the regions of darkness in his arduous journey to earth, encountering alone the shock of elements; daring his tremendous foe to the combat; deceiving Uzziel, opposing Gabriel; and, finally, persisting amidst dangers of every kind until he had effectuated his purpose; when in all these situations we keep in our eye the glory of his former state, and yet see him coping with the highest created beings, even when he stood

———— With faded splendor wan:

the pernicious nature of his enterprize, the malevolence of his disposition, and even the destruction which he is represented to have brought upon the human race, cannot prevent us from surveying him with an admiration and pity, which though it should be culpable, cannot be suppressed.

In fact, however, the admiration excited by qualities of this kind upon being traced to its source, will be discovered to exist without dependence, not only on moral character of what kind soever, but even

on

on the more striking light in which a person must appear when contemplated by an individual as a friend or an enemy. In this last case, it may indeed happen, that the medium of prejudice will either obscure the lustre of those qualities where they are acknowledged to subsist, and by that means considerably lessen our admiration; or by concealing these from us altogether, will remove the cause from which this passion proceeds. But both the instances above-mentioned are proofs that the theory we have here laid down proceeds upon just principles, as it is obvious that a mind distinguished by the virtues of fortitude, intrepidity, and a certain daring ambition, is contemplated in general with an admiration which can have no other foundation but those excellencies, since we find this always corresponding to the degree in which the former are supposed to take place.

From this train of observation we will readily comprehend the reason for which true sublimity of character requires most frequently to be displayed in adversity.

The

The virtues of which we have seen it principally to consist, are all of them either of that kind (as those of fortitude, patience, intrepidity, &c.) which can only be exerted in actual and resolute opposition to evils, or of that, (as hardy enterprize, or aspiring ambition) which leads us immediately to foresee that these must be encountered. In the last mentioned cases the sublime of character appears perhaps greater than in the first. Imagination in this instance is left at liberty to form an idea of perils to be met with when the person sets out on some daring and arduous attempt, whereas in the other, it is fixed down to the contemplation of such events as the author has already invented. So much does our pleasure in all cases whatever arise rather from the expectation of what is to happen, than from the enjoyment of what is actually possessed.

Thus we have endeavoured by following the track of imagination along the various scenes in which its influence is displayed, to show its real value and importance in the art of Composition; to distinguish

tinguish its genuine exertions when guided by sound judgment from such as are the consequences of its intemperance, or which it shares in common with other intellectual faculties, to show the degree of its strength or comprehension as determined by the objects to which it is directed; and, finally, to ascertain its merit as the power of invention by marking its effects in the simplest as well as the most diversified fields of its exercise. We might, indeed, have further contemplated this power as the parent of allegorical personages, and as productive of that machinery with which fable is decorated. But in both these respects (as far as they have not fallen within the preceding observations) we will naturally be led to consider imagination in the subsequent sections of this essay.

SECTION IV.

Of Penetration, or Discernment, as it regards Composition.

THE offices of the two principal intellectual powers we have considered particularly in the preceding sections, as far as the present subject is concerned. Before we proceed any farther, it may be proper to pause a little here, and take a general view of what each of these topics hath suggested. The faculty of reason, and that of imagination we have seen to be essentially different from each other; not only in their original choice of objects, but in their method of procedure, in order to obtain an ultimate purpose. The understanding we have observed, when employed either in methodising the parts of a comprehensive plan so as to give the whole proportion, or in carrying on a process of regular argumentation to a period, accomplisheth its purpose universally by means that indicate caution and circumspection.

On

On the contrary, the assemblages that are formed by imagination consist of ideas instantaneously combined, in which the mind expects to meet rather with animated expressions than just disposition; and with strokes that excite momentary sensations, instead of such as terminate in permanent conviction. When therefore, it was observed in another part of this work, that deliberate recollection and a *gradual* rather than a *rapid* succession of ideas, are criteria that accompany a talent for Composition*; the remark is to be understood of minds, in which this faculty, though losing no part of its natural quickness and energy, is fixed by that of judgment so steadily upon each particular object as to contemplate and display it with precision. The inventions (if we may thus term them) of fancy when viewed apart, as far as such a view can be taken of it, bear no marks of this precision. Its flights are sudden and irregular; its transitions frequent and unconnected; and its procedure

* Sect. i. p. 31.

such as dispassionate reason rather neglects than censures.

When we examine with close attention that combination of qualities greatly diversified, by which the characters of men are distinguished, reflection will point out to us the marks of an intellectual power different from both the former in its manner of operation; whose effects we shall endeavour to unfold more particularly, as it has not as far as we know been formerly distinguished from others. The reader will judge from what has been already advanced, that the power here referred to is that denominated the faculty of *Discernment*, of which we formerly endeavoured to give some general idea. We shall here enforce those observations, 1. by making some remarks on the characters or signatures by which this power of the mind is particularly distinguished from the others, and on the union by which it is constituted. 2. We shall consider its peculiar province, and manner of operation in the various departments of Composition.

1. The

1. The word Discernment we have formerly observed, points out “that mental faculty which, without carrying on any regular process, comprehends as it were instantaneously the proper manner of treating any subject, by fixing upon the points that are of primary importance; and accomplisheth, at once, by these means purposes which the understanding *alone* cannot effectuate in some cases by any exertion; and abstains in those to which it is adapted by a slow and deliberate procedure*.” The term in this acceptation corresponds to a sight clear, piercing, and qualified to take immediate as well as ample cognizance of the objects that are presented to it. That there is a quality of the mind distinguished by these characters, no man (whether possessed of it himself or not) will call in question, who reflects upon the ideas which the decisions and sentiments of those in whom it is judged to predominate, call naturally up to his thought. When we attempt to ex-

* Sect. i. p. 11.

plain any point in which there is considerable difficulty, as many, perhaps the far greater number of men, must be gradually led to comprehend it by having every part of the process clearly laid open, and every objection regularly superseded; there are a few with whom this method of proceeding is unnecessary. As soon as the subject is laid down, and a few principal evidences laid before them, these take in the whole by a kind of intuitive perception; supplying the intermediate means so quickly, as to render particular representation inexpedient. Such persons we commonly denominate men of *quick parts*, or of *acute intellect*. When engaged in the same manner in the business of life, the same qualities by whose exertion they are *acute critics* in the former instance, render them *penetrating observers* in the other. In this last case indeed, some part of that knowledge of mankind which experience confers, must be acquired, without whose influence the greatest abilities must fail of judging with adequate comprehension. But when there is a concurrence of this last with certain

qualities which we shall explain afterwards, the man becomes capable of entering deeply into the characters of those with whom he is conversant. He gains a facility of reading in the countenance those sensations, however closely concealed, that actuate the heart *; and of collecting from casual, loose, and unsupported assertions thrown out apparently at random, as hints of what might have been advanced, such significant and distinguishing criteria as are decisive of their justness, propriety, and importance.

When we consider with the same object in view, the finer arts as they are called, particularly those of poetry and eloquence, effects similar to such as have been already mentioned, naturally point to the same original cause. The transitions particularly in purely poetic composition, are often

* “ Est in primis *acuti* (says a penetrating judge of human nature) *videre, quo judex dicto moveatur, quid respuat: quod ex vultu scipissime, & aliquando etiam dicto, factove ejus deprehenditur. Et inslare proficientibus, & ab iis quæ non adjuvant, quam mollissime pedem oportet referre.*” Quintil. Instit. lib. vi. c. 5.

abrupt, and at first view appear to be unconnected. The thoughts likewise seem to stand detached from each other; and by the high colouring of imagination are frequently rendered obscure. Eloquence we have seen in the same manner to be often most conspicuous, when abrupt interrogations, and strokes of nature and passion are thrown into a discourse, whose connection with the preceding circumstances is apparently remote, and to be fully comprehended only by those who have a thorough knowledge of the heart *. As the person who works by these means upon the most powerful principles of human nature, must know every method of calling them into strenuous exercise; he likewise who is sensible of the full force of every motive that is applied for such purposes, must, it

* “ In iis causis (quæ sunt frequentissimæ) quæ vel solis extra artem probationibus, vel mistis continentur, asperrima in hac parte dimicatio est, nec alibi dixeris magis *mucrone pugnari*. Nam & firmissimæ quæque memoriæ iudicis inculcanda sunt, & præstandum quicquid in actione promissimus, & refellenda mendacia.” Id. *ibid.*

is obvious, possess a considerable proportion of the same intelligence; and of the faculty that lays open to him the heart and affections.

That this mental power, by whatever designation it may be made known, ought to be considered in a distinct point of view from either of those whose offices we have yet mentioned, will be obvious from the following account of its nature and effects.

1. We have already taken notice of one striking difference betwixt the faculty of discernment, and the understanding or reasoning power strictly so called, as the former is distinguished by a quickness of perception, which stands in opposition to the slow and cautious procedure of the latter *. This is one of those observations which

* It is from having viewed the understanding in this light that an eminent writer is enabled to lay down so particularly the different methods by which its influence may be counteracted. These he reduces to three heads, which he considers as extending to the principal subjects in which it is exercised.—“ Vel per illaqueationem sophismatum quod ad *Dialecticam* pertinet; vel per præstigias verborum, quod ad *Rhetoricam*;

which it is neither necessary nor indeed practicable to confirm by regular argumentation. Every man's feeling and experience must decide on the truth of it. It is only requisite that we observe, in order to know how far the powers here compared together, really differ in their method of operation; whether there are not many persons possessed of unquestioned judgment as discovered either in carrying on, or in examining a regular process of argument, who far from taking in the whole the view of capital strokes when exposed separately, find even the images that illustrate sentiment to some minds, so many obstructions to a perfect knowledge of the subject; and enter into it thoroughly only when objects pass successively in re-

Rhetoricam; vel per affectuum violentiam quod ad *Ethicam*. Quemadmodum enim in negotiis quæ cum aliis contrahimus, vinci quis & perduci solet, vel astu, vel importunitate, vel vehementia, ita etiam in illa negotiatione interna, &c. Neque vero tam infeliciter agitur cum humana natura, ut illæ artes & facultates ad rationem deturbandam valeant; nequiquam vero ad eandem roborandam & stabiliendam." Bac. de Augment. Scient. lib. vi. p. 366. edit. Ravestien,

view, described in the simplest words, and placed in arrangement so nearly perfect, as not to be deficient in any point of the smallest consequence. Should this be granted, we are naturally led to ask, whence it is, that men, who unquestionably possess this intellectual power, and exhibit when called upon every indication of it, discover at the same time the traces of a procedure which never characterises the man of mere understanding? The *different manner of operation* here evidently distinguisheth this last mentioned faculty from that to which we apply the word Discernment, in whose conduct we observe the marks of understanding eminently conspicuous, along with such as appear to be derived from some original wholly distinct from it.

— 2. But not only is this quality different from the former in the instance above-mentioned. We shall find it to be so in an equal degree, when we consider Comprehension as shared in common by both.

The man of Discernment may be said in general to form a much more comprehensive view of things than he who possesseth judgment

judgment alone, however clear and extensive; because he takes into his estimate, as we shall see immediately, a much larger and more diversified series of objects. It ought however to be observed at the same time, that as the sphere in which this faculty acts is much larger than that of the other, so its decisions are sometimes less accurate. The reason of this we shall discover upon giving attention to their procedure. The understanding by having shifted and examined its objects in every point of view, discovers at last such defects as were at first least perceptible; and thus takes into its survey *whatever* is finally subservient to its ultimate purpose. The discerning faculty on the other hand from its affinity to imagination, attracted most commonly by striking, animated, and peculiar expressions, is less attentive to general uniformity. What it obtains therefore on the part of strength and novelty, it is often in hazard of losing on the side of exactness and proportion. These observations will be most clearly illustrated by trying an example.

It is acknowledged universally, that true discernment is in nothing more conspicuous, than in combining the various principles of action into some *original character*; or in judging of this combination when presented to view. There is an infinite variety of motives by which conduct may be regulated according to the situation in which a man is placed; and in adapting a particular incident so happily to the distinguishing passion or principle as to place it in a clear and striking light, an author shows himself most particularly to be a penetrating judge of human nature. But while he is intent upon this circumstance, the power that enables him to do justice to one part of a character, may at the same time overlook another of essential consequence, and thus by discerning only what is suitable at the time, without attending to the mutual coherence of parts, may finish one branch with the utmost accuracy, while an obvious incongruity takes place among all. Thus it is that discernment, from its energy and quickness, often forms an estimate whose defects the understanding

ing is called in afterwards to supply. Cool and dispassionate thought concentrates at last in one point of view whatever hath a tendency to establish an hypothesis, or to determine an opinion. But in either of these cases an eye immediately fixed upon particular objects, of whatever importance, will overlook at the time circumstances that reflection may afterwards suggest, but which could not have been then recollected without supposing that two powers of the mind, whose offices we have seen to be different, should select at the same instant objects of various natures; and should act with an uniformity that is incompatible with their distinct modes of operation.

3. We observed as a proof of the superior comprehension of the faculty we are contemplating here, that it takes in a much larger and more diversified series of objects than that of reason considered by itself. The proof of this remark will lead us to take notice as the last instance of the difference betwixt these of the different natures of the objects selected by them. Here we must acknowledge, that while the man of penetration

penetration (in the sense given to that term in this work) judges of every point that is examined by the understanding, he is attentive to, and is qualified to decide on others of which the dispassionate reasoner takes not cognizance. This last indeed, judgeth with great justness and propriety of its own usual operation on the human mind, in the same manner as a man who hath been long accustomed to observe the several expressions of his own countenance in a mirror, will be struck with the same, or even with similar characters in that of another. A *discerning* judge of mankind, is equally qualified when he suppresseth the influence of imagination on his decisions, to judge of this matter as coolly as the reasoner who traceth up effects deliberately to their causes; and by observing in what manner his own judgment operates when tried in various circumstances, will form an adequate idea of the principal characters by which it is distinguished. Of every other means by which the reasoning faculty is rendered conspicuous, we may in the same manner pronounce, that this intellectual

lectual discernment is peculiarly qualified either to judge of, or to exercise it. It is otherwise with regard to the understanding, when we come to examine the more peculiar province of that power whose offices we are employed in contemplating. A man of deep penetration, and strong sensibility, may reason solidly and calmly on subjects that demand to be laid open by close argumentation; because a very superior share of the power that employs this medium to effectuate its purpose, enters into his character. But is the abstracted reasoner, whose feelings perhaps are weak, and his passions subjected to the controul of reason at all times, able to detect with the same perspicacity the causes of actions lying remote in the heart, and indicating certain powerful emotions with which he is wholly unacquainted?—Certainly not.—“Why?” Because he hath here no principles upon which to proceed. He cannot in this, as in other instances, judge from *comparison*, because having never been sensible of the effect himself, which he is incapable perhaps of having
strongly

strongly excited, he has recourse in vain to his own mind for any cause that may determine his judgment. In this case likewise he cannot discover the original principle by any process of ratiocination, however accurate. The effects of the passions must be *known* in order to be described; and the feelings of a susceptible heart are not to be laid open by any process which the understanding carries on; but are *painted* by him who hath *experienced* their influence.

From these remarks we may discover the reason for which the observations and the precepts of many philosophers on these last subjects, are considered as cold and uninteresting. A man of sensibility rejects with indignation the rules which he who appears to have no passions himself, lays down very calmly for restraining their excess. It is the *discerning mind* (as it may justly be denominated) which enters thoroughly into this matter, and counteracts most powerfully the influence of the passions by drawing a picture from experience of the manner in which they operate

rate

rate on conduct. In this character the understanding and imagination concentrating their energy, the latter renders him to whom it belongs susceptible of strong impressions from the objects that pass around him; and the former directs him to cast off those only which are of importance, as well as to combine their causes with other principles that give consistency to the whole.

Hence we may trace to its original the difference betwixt the view which Isocrates, and that which Homer presents of human nature. Let us take an example from each, as this will illustrate the preceding observations. The epistle of the former, inscribed to Demonicus, consists principally of admonitions that regard his conduct in life. He desires this young man particularly “to try to obtain a conquest over
“those things by which it is unworthy to
“be held in subjection; such as riches,
“anger, pleasure, and pain. This conquest, says he, you will obtain with
“regard to the first, if you consider the
“acquisition of wealth rather as a mean
“to

“ to encrease your glory, than to form a
 “ mass of useless treasure. You will sub-
 “ due anger if you always acquit yourself
 “ to the person who hath given offence,
 “ as you would wish him in similar cir-
 “ cumstances to do to you. Your desires
 “ you will hold perfectly in subjection, if
 “ you reflect properly how unbecoming
 “ it is, that he who commands others,
 “ should himself be the slave of appetite
 “ and pleasure. You will in the last place
 “ rise superior to the shock of adversity,
 “ if you compare your own calamities
 “ with those of others, and remember at
 “ all times that you are a man *.”

These

* Ὅφ' ὡν κρατεῖσθαι τὴν ψυχὴν αἰσχρὸν, τούτων
 ἐγκρατεῖαν ἀσχεῖ πάντων, κερδὲς, ὀργῆς, ἡδονῆς,
 λύπης. Ἐστὶ δὲ τοιοῦτος, εἰ κερδὴ μὲν εἶναι νομίζῃς δι' ὧν
 εὐδοκίμησεις, ἀλλ' μὴ δι' ὧν εὐπορήσεις. Τῇ δὲ ὀργῇ
 ἀν' ἀπαρπλησίως ἐχθρὸς τῆς ἀμαρτανούντας, ὥστερ
 ἀν' ὡς σεαυτοῦ ἀμαρτανόντα, καὶ τῆς ἀλλῆς ἐχρεῖν
 ἀξιώσεως. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς Τερπνοῖς ἀναισχρὸν ὑπολαβῆς,
 τῶν μὲν οἰκειῶν ἈΡΧΕΙΝ, ταῖς δὲ ἡδοναῖς ΔΟΥΛΕΥ-
 ΕΙΝ. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς Λυπηροῖς, ἀν' τὰς τῶν ἀλλῶν
 ἀτυχίας ἐπιβλεπῇς, καὶ σεαυτοῦ ὡς ἀνθρώπος, ὑπομιμ-
 νήσκῃς. ΠΡΟΣ ΔΗΜΟΝΙΚ. Many of the Pytha-
 gorean

These advices will be justly denominated judicious. But they are indeed “the sug-

gorean philosophers, whose writings have reached the present times, lay down cold and general rules of the same kind with the former; which, though perfectly just and rational, can have no influence on practice. *Καλον επι παντι το ΙΣΟΝ, Υπερβολη δε και Ελλειψις α μοι δοκει*, says an ancient sage (Democritus) of great eminence. Who disputes the truth of this observation, or who receives benefit from knowing it? The ingenious Theophrastus, in his piece entitled *ΗΘΙΚΟΙ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΕΣ*, pursues a very simple method in treating of the passions; but one that is much more likely to be of use. Proceeding upon the maxim that

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,

As to be hated, needs but to be seen; POPE. he goes no farther than giving a plain but full description of the persons in whom certain vices predominate; and of the effects by which the character may be known. *Εκθησω δε σοι (says he to his friend) κατα γενοσ οσα τε τυγχανει γενη τροπων τειτοις προσκειμενα, και ου τροπον τη οικονομια χρωνται.* In proem. Our author's plan is, in other words, to present to men in general a just picture of their faults and vices so clearly and forcibly drawn as that each may select his own amidst an assemblage so promiscuous; and by seeing its deformity may be enabled to correct it. Such a representation required knowledge of the human heart, and has obviously a stronger effect than any general admonition.

“ gestions

“gestions of a mind at ease.” What effect would they produce upon the angry man, the miser, the voluptuary, or the headstrong?—Whether such general and unappropriated maxims would work any permanent effect upon practice, let the persons who may be subject to these passions pronounce.—Let us next consider in what manner Homer hath treated this subject.

That it is the purpose of the *Iliad* to expose the fatal consequences that arise from the indulgence of anger, is known to every man who hath any acquaintance with that work. We are not here to show how this author acquits himself in attacking the present passion, as a POET; but how he succeeds in his purpose considered as a philosopher, and a man of discernment. The ninth book of this admired work (which perhaps has less than any of the others of purely poetic beauty) affords a striking example of the present kind. In the various addresses made to Achilles by those who proposed to moderate his anger, observe the means that are applied for this purpose!—Ulysses recalls to his
memory

memory the parting advice of his father Peleus, that he ought above all other things to repress *this* passion*; after having attempted to kindle every latent spark of commiseration in the heart of this hero, by a pathetic detail of the miseries of his country†. He tries to set one passion in opposition to another in his mind; and to overcome his resentment by awaking the powerful stimulus of ambition ‡.

But in order to set the pernicious effects of this blind fury completely before us, Achilles, whom the eloquence of Ulysses

* Ω ὡπεπον, ἡ μὲν σοὶ γέ πατήρ ἐπετελλάτο Πηλεὺς
 Ἡματι τῷ οὔτε ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε·
 Τέκνον ἐμὸν, καρτὸς μὲν Ἀθηναίῃ τε καὶ Ἡρῇ
 Δωσουσ' αἰκ' ἐθέλωσι, σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν
 ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι· ΦΙΛΟΦΡΟΣΤΝΗ ΓΑΡ ΑΜΕΙΝΩΝ·

ΙΛΙΑΔ. 6.

† ——— Ἐκτὼρ δὲ μέγα σθένει βλεμναίνων
 Μαινέται ἐκπαγλῶς, τίσυνος Διὶ, οὐδὲ τι τιεῖ
 Ἄνδρας οὐδὲ θεοὺς; ἤρατερη δὲ ἐλυσσά δαδύκει·
 Στεύται γὰρ νηῶν ἀποκοψεῖν ἄκρα κορυμβά, &c. ib.

‡ ——— σὺ δὲ ἀλλοὺς περ' ἀνὰ χαιῶν
 Τειρομένους ἐλεαίρε κατὰ σφάτον; οἱ σε θεὸν ὡς
 Τίσουσ' ἢ γὰρ κέ σφι μάλα μέγα κῆδος ἀροίω; &c.

could not move from his purpose, is next attacked by that of Phœnix, his tutor, his friend; whose age is respectable, and whose tears stream as he speaks. Let any reader compare the arguments that are brought here against the indulgence of resentment, with the *judicious* advice of the philosopher, and judge which of the two best understood human nature *. The former writes like a man of good sense †,

* It would have run this part of the work into unnecessary length, to have mentioned the characters by which the address of Phœnix is particularly distinguished. The reader will find these, with every other eloquent beauty that occurs in this book, pointed out with great propriety in the notes of Mr. Pope's translation.

† Quintilian assigns, with his usual accuracy and discernment, the various species of argumentation by which reason obtains its purpose.—“*Esse quædam reor (says he) in omni genere probationum communia. Nam nec ulla quæstio est quæ non sit aut in re, aut in persona: nec esse argumentorum loci possunt, nisi in iis quæ rebus & personis accidunt. Eaque aut per se inspicere solent, aut ad aliud referri. Nec ulla confirmatio nisi ex antecedentibus, aut ex consequentibus, aut ex repugnantibus. Et hæc necesse est, aut ex præterito tempore, aut ex conjuncto, aut ex sequenti petere.*” *Instit. lib. iv. c. 8.*

whose

whose own passions were cool and ductile, and who formed a judgment of all others by himself. The latter, on the contrary, is a *penetrating* judge of his subject, deeply acquainted with the *heart* of man, and with the most powerful motive by which it is actuated *.—To what cause ought this striking difference, so conspicuous in the present instance, (and of which an intelligent reader may meet with many similar examples) to be ascribed?—Not surely to mere superiority of understanding in the last; for of this faculty both Isocrates, and other authors who lay down rules for the conduct of life, are acknowledged to have possessed a very eminent share. Besides, it is unquestionably certain, that this intellectual power often distinguisheth in an high degree minds that are yet disqualified to present such a picture of the human heart as Homer hath here exhibited.

* “ *Ingenium celeres quidem motus ad excogitandum acute, & quædam intelligentiæ alacritas ostendit. Judicium vero sapiens animi Mora, & matura inter res plures estimatio ostendet.*” Strad. Prolus. 1 Orat.

Is it then to imagination that this effect is to be ascribed?—Surely no man ever supposed that this power considered separately from the other, can be the parent of those expostulations that so powerfully impress the mind; and of that *design* which appears in the arrangement of various means, rendered subservient without declination to an ultimate purpose. It follows then, that “there is a mental power different in its manner of operation, in its extent of comprehension, and in its choice of objects, from both those whose offices we have formerly examined; and to this it is that we have here applied the designation of the FACULTY of DISCERNMENT*.”

Since

* Should it be deemed necessary to trace the difference betwixt the discerning and the inventive faculty more particularly than hath been done in the text, we would observe, that as reason is distinguished from the first of these in consequence of its slow and deliberate procedure; imagination is equally so by its volatility, and its views that are equally indiscriminate and superficial. Discernment we have already seen, of whatever subject it takes cognizance, is always known by examining

Since therefore this quality differs in essential respects both from that of reason and of invention when viewed as independent of each other, as far as such a view of them can be taken, it must obviously be constituted by the union of both; of whose influence reflection will show it to participate in very different degrees. From the former it receives steadiness, solidity, a proper direction, and a power of selecting the most unexceptionable means. From

examining it to the bottom; and by seizing in every case such means as are most proper to obtain an ultimate end. Imagination, on the contrary, if left wholly to itself, would neither propose to accomplish any *eligible* end, nor discover perspicacity in the choice of means. When its prevalence over the reasoning power is remarkable in any instance; it will be fixed in some cases rather by the brilliance and drapery of objects, than by their importance: in others, when the prospect is more uniform, no parts will be discovered to have comparative excellence. In all cases whatever, its course, wholly different from that which the discerning mind pursues, will be excentric and irregular. Its light likewise instead of displaying parts of principal beauty or utility in a work, must lose its influence by being indiscriminately and promiscuously reflected over all.

the latter is derived its quickness, perspicacity, and almost intuitive perception of character and manners. By the understanding a *penetrating* judge discovers the purport of arguments as leading to some principle: while by the inventive faculty co-operating in this work, its *sight is sharpened* (if that expression may be used) with regard to *particular objects*, without being impaired in the least degree as to general extent and comprehension. Thus we see by what means the mind fixeth at once upon *decisive criteria*; and imagination with all its natural volatility is rendered subservient to the important purpose either of clearing, or of investigating truth.

Again, when the various emotions of the heart are to be traced to their sources, as arising from one passion upon some occasions, and upon others from a mixture extremely complicated*; in these cases, when

* A consummate judge of mankind carries the source of action here mentioned so far, as to derive from it principally not only the actions but the opinions
of

when the superior mental powers are united in such a manner as constitutes Discernment; the causes which fancy would have scanned very slightly, if not wholly overlooked, will be thoroughly investigated; and tests drawn from the surest of evidences, I mean those of feeling and experience, will be applied to estimate their stability and power. It is indeed in this last light, as was formerly observed, that penetration is principally conspicuous, as mere judgment, and mere imagination, with regard to such objects, is equally deficient. For the understanding of an individual proceeds not beyond the sober track of reasoning upon facts or principles established by itself; or of examining the justness of such reasoning established upon

of mankind. “Nec est enim in dicendo majus, quam ut faveat oratori is qui audiet; utque ipse sic moveatur, ut impetu quodam animi, magis quam judicio, aut concilio regatur. Plura enim multo homines judicant odio, aut amore, aut cupiditate, aut iracundia, aut dolore, aut lætitia, aut spe, aut timore, aut aliqua permonitione mentis, quam veritate aut præscripto, aut juris norma aliqua, aut judicii formula, aut legibus.”
Cicer. de Orat. lib. ii.

similar facts and principles by that of another. Of the passions and affections it judgeth philosophically by attending to their most usual phenomena in life. But when effects are derived from these united with imagination, and impelled by it *, the man of mere reason, however comprehensive, being destitute himself of feelings that correspond to such as this union produceth, is evidently deprived of the principles upon which an estimate can be formed, or an enquiry conducted.

* It is in this case that such a conflict of jarring passions is often excited, that the nicest Discernment, when tracing effects to their originals in so promiscuous an assemblage, is often scarce adequate to the task of observing the effects that arise from passions, with whose usual operation, when each is examined apart, it is thoroughly acquainted. It is well observed by a modern critic on this point. “Entre ces obstacles qui ruinent les passions, les passions memes ne sont pas le moindres. Les uns combattent & detruisent les autres : & si l’on met ensemble un sujet de joie & un sujet de tristesse, on ne sera bien sentir aucune des deux. Horace nous avertit que tout la licence poetique ne s’etende point jusqu’a ce melange.” Bossu du Poeme Epique liv. iii. p. 354.

II. Having thus endeavoured to show in what respects the discerning faculty differs from the principal powers of the mind considered singly; and in what manner it is constituted by their union, we come next to consider its peculiar province when it is viewed as influencing the various species of Composition. It hath been already observed, that “when a large proportion
“ of the inventive is combined with a
“ much greater share of the reasoning faculty, to which last therefore it is subservient, the intellectual eye will most
“ commonly take cognizance of that disquisition which is directed by the understanding.” It is thus that philosophical discernment is constituted. A share, on the other hand, of imagination more adequate to that of reason in a mind distinguished eminently by both, renders the influence of Discernment more conspicuous and universal than in the first instance; because
“ it appears in this case with equal advantage when judging of the arts, as of
“ the investigations of science, and can
“ pronounce as properly of what is beautiful

“ *tifful* in the one, as of what is *just* and “ *decisive* in the other.” In these two general lights we propose here to take a view of this intellectual quality, as we shall thus be able to determine its office with precision as far as the present subject is concerned.

1. Discernment when turned to philosophical disquisition, not only suggests to a man the truest and happiest method of treating his subject, as soon as he hath acquired a general knowledge of it; but it enables him likewise to fix upon the most decisive evidence; to adopt the most significant illustrations; and to confirm his hypothesis where proof is most necessary, by observing and superseding objections.

We have already considered the understanding as the parent of exact methodical arrangement; a criterion from which we justly form a judgment of its clearness and comprehension. There is, however, as we may learn from experience, a certain “ *curiosa felicitas*,” as it may be termed, the art of disposition; a certain happy manner of putting facts or circumstances together,

together, which we never meet with but among writers of distinguished *penetration*, in the sense that is here given to that term. What is it that renders the discourses of Plato on valour, friendship, death, immortality, &c. so much more agreeable than those of other philosophers who have examined the same subjects? Every reader must be sensible that this is owing in a great measure to the manner in which he hath disposed his sentiments on these subjects. Instead of attending wholly to what it may be just necessary to advance on one point, and proceeding immediately to another, this author often takes so large a circuit at his first setting out, that we are at a loss to determine at what point his process will terminate. By keeping the mind in suspense, he in this manner irresistibly fixeth its attention; and while he is sometimes apparently negligent of close methodical arrangement, accomplisheth all the ends to which it is subservient; along with another important purpose which attention to perfect regularity contributes not to bring about.

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The illustrious Roman orator and philosopher has wrote a treatise entitled, *De Natura Deorum*, which has reached the present times. The same subject is treated by Phurnutus, a Greek philosopher, who explains very succinctly, and at the same time with much perspicuity, the various parts of nature which the deities represented. Yet the first of these (though not the most shining of Cicero's writings) is universally known: the last is as much neglected. The reason is, that the Roman, who is formed in a great measure upon the Athenian philosopher formerly referred to, rangeth his diversified materials in such a manner as that these throw mutual light upon each other; and by going out of his way as it might seem, upon some occasions, to bring illustrations of his sentiments, he keeps attention always awake while a succession of pleasing ideas passeth before the imagination*. The other, on
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* The beautiful verses which he is supposed to have taken from the *Medea* of Accius, to mention no other proof of this kind, forms one of the most agreeable illustrations.

the contrary, just dispatcheth his business in the fewest words, and without taking any compass to give a beautiful variety to his Composition, pursues one topic with the same uniform brevity, after he hath finished a former.

What shall we say of these writers when thus compared together?—That the last mentioned treats his subject like a man of understanding, who comprehends and unfolds it with perspicuity. But the former are *discerning* judges of human nature, who keep in their eye the complicated qualities of which characters are formed; and in order to accomplish a purpose with one of

illustrations. De Natur. Deor. lib. ii. At other times when talking of the mysterious conduct of the deity, he has recourse, with great knowledge of human nature, to examples that were recent to his readers in order to illustrate his sentiments on this perplexing subject. “Cur omnium crudelissimus (says he) tamdiu Cinna regnavit?—At dedit poenas.—Prohiberi melius fuit, impedirique, ne tot summos viros interficeret, quam ipse aliquando poenas dare,” &c. We are not here entering into the propriety or justice of these sentiments. Our business is only to take notice of the manner in which they are laid down and illustrated.

these

these effectually, judge it proper to have recourse alternately to each *.

2. As the faculty here examined directs to the happiest method of treating a subject, so it fixeth likewise in the conduct of argumentation, upon the most decisive evidence. This end it effectuates by enabling a writer, as was formerly observed, “*to hit upon that particular point upon which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends* *.” That

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* It is the same in history as in philosophy. The man of judgment will relate facts with great perspicuity, and will accompany these with solid and edifying observations. But there is a method of instructing and fatiguing the mind at the same time; and where these two accompany each other, the sphere of the former must be very much contracted. This happens when there is an uniform recital of facts and observations drawn from these regularly carried on; the remarks always succeeding the narration of events periodically, instead of being happily interwoven with it, so as to grow as it were out of the action, and to be pursued no farther than as it serves for illustration. Among modern historians who have fixed on the same general subject, Rapin and Hume are the historians of England. The first is a circumstantial and judicious writer,

it is the peculiar province of the discerning faculty to fix upon these points in the conduct

writer, whose relation of facts is both distinct and particular; and whose observations on these are usually just and natural. In perusing his extensive work we find one uniform method invariably pursued. The transactions are first related at full length. The remarks on these are commonly placed by themselves likewise, so that the reader is never at a loss in the narration to know what will be the strain of a whole paragraph, unmixed with incidental sentiment or illustration, by casting his eye on the margin. This stiff method of procedure renders this valuable work tedious and uninteresting to readers who desire to be entertained as well as edified in reading history, and who neglect the *useful* when the *agreeable* is not united with it. The detail of events in Hume's History (which taken altogether is, in the author's opinion, one of the most complete performances of its kind) is much more concise. But he fixeth with great propriety upon circumstances that render us acquainted at once with the manners of the times and with the characters of the principal personages. These, in consequence of their own importance, and of the observations that are happily thrown into the narration without *breaking* it, form altogether an highly interesting exhibition. We are pleased with the historian's arrangement of such various materials, as well as with their selection, and consider the end of history as accomplished by the whole. The inference deducible here with regard to the

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duct of evidence, will be obvious, when we reflect upon what hath been already said on its usual manner of operation. We observed, as one of the most distinguishing criteria of this power, that as soon as a subject is laid down, it comprehends the most proper manner of treating it without any tedious process of reasoning, by *fixing upon the points that are of principal importance.*

Upon weighing therefore the evidence by which any doubtful point is to be established, the man of Discernment perceives immediately, not merely the force of one argument compared with another in bringing his proof to perfection; but that particular one which hath peculiar energy, as conveying an idea in the clearest and most forcible manner to the mind. Thus it happens, that in canvassing a question, such a man throws out at once every thing that is frivolous, and absolutely foreign to the purpose. Perceiving

the *judgment* of one writer and the *discernment* of the other, is too obvious upon the principles laid down in this work to be particularly insisted on.

immediately

immediately in what manner each reason or motive may be most powerfully enforced or applied, he bends the whole force of his talents to the accomplishment of that purpose; and in this manner hits the point upon which the proof may be said to rest as being decisive of its propriety; and which, when once placed clearly before the mind, supercedes the use of any subsequent enlargement. The influence of the superior intellectual powers acting in combination here is obvious. The understanding, sharpened and animated in its procedure, by being united with a vigorous imagination, sees at once the full effect of an important circumstance, which without this union it would have discovered by a gradual and circumstantial disquisition. It rejects therefore as frivolous, arguments whose tendency is not so immediately perceptible, or which lie more open to exceptions; a while it contemplates such as have the most lasting effect, the inventive power supplies the means of enforcing these with suitable energy, and of rendering their influence complete.

3. That the discerning faculty therefore will likewise suggest amidst various objects of illustration, those that have the greatest significance when applied to certain motives or arguments, is a point that admits of very easy proof. It is fancy that invents these illustrations, and it is to judgment that we owe their proper application. This last power never fails to select such as are most appropriated to their objects, when imagination presents before it a diversified assemblage. When this last is languid and enervated, its exertions, whatever strength the understanding may possess, must be proportionably feeble; and while we are impressed suitably by the sentiments that are dictated by one faculty, we must at the same time be sensible, that it cannot illustrate these by significant allusions, when there is a defect in that power from which they are derived.

Hence we may discover the cause for which many excellent philosophical performances are deficient in those expressive images which give perspicuity as well as beauty to Composition. The judgment of
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the writer is conspicuous in the whole execution. But having either never received from nature any suitable proportion of imagination; or having neglected to cultivate it, he either makes feeble attempts to imitate an excellence of which he perceives the use; or dropping it altogether, he mars the purpose which he proposed ultimately to bring about. It is therefore in consequence of that union of the intellectual powers which constitutes Discernment, that the most significant illustrations are selected as much in philosophical as in any other species of Composition, and are applied to their corresponding originals.

4. We observed in the last place, that it is the discerning faculty by which a philosopher is enabled most effectually to perceive and to supersede objections to which his theory may lie open. We do not here mean to affirm that a man possessed of this mental quality even in the highest degree, will be capable to detect every real, and far less every frivolous exception that may tend to invalidate his positions. Of the first, it is undoubtedly proper that

such as have importance should be perceived and removed. With regard to the others, an author would take up both his own and his readers attention to very little purpose, who should seriously attempt to obviate these, even supposing him to have observed them.—But in order fully to comprehend the province of Discernment in this sphere of its exertion, we must enter more particularly into the subject.

The objections considered in general to which propositions that require to be confirmed or illustrated lie open, are principally of the following kinds. Either these are such as must occur to every mind upon the first proposal of a subject, and such therefore as it obviously suggests; or though not thus immediately perceived, they are seen to arise naturally from the various subdivisions of a general plan, as an author may take these up successively in the course of his examination;—or, lastly, they are of that kind which arise from particular causes that operate within a narrow compass, and though of the utmost consequence when strenuously urged, would

would elude the scrutiny of the far greater number of mankind.

Let us suppose, in order to exemplify these observations, that a writer takes for his subject the passions of human nature, and the necessity there is for keeping them in subjection. After having exposed the evils unavoidably arising from an indulgence of these, when carried to excess; every man will be ready to object, as soon as the means of subduing them begin to be proposed, the weakness and imperfection of the human mind, which renders the language of the poet that of man in general,

Video meliora proboque,

Deteriora sequor.

This therefore is a plea which would be universally urged against all his arguments; and such as, if passed over without an attempt to obviate, would render his rules, however excellent and judiciously disposed, of no effect.

Having therefore guarded as much as possible against the force of this objection which strikes at his general plan, he pro-

ceeds to consider the passions as distinguished separately from each other, and to ascertain the influence, design, and tendency of each. Here the pleas which every man is ready to urge in defence of that passion which predominates in his own mind, will fall naturally under his consideration as objections against the reasons that he may advance for limiting its dominion. These it will be observed are less universal than the former; and though strenuously supported by such as are interested particularly in the cause, are however of a different kind from those in which all would consider themselves as concerned in general. A man of solid and comprehensive understanding, as he would be immediately on his guard against an objection of the first kind in treating this subject, as well as qualified to remove it, so he would probably suggest with equal success many of the excuses by which the indulgence of certain passions is vindicated, and would show their inefficacy. But according to the degree in which the power of a passion or prejudice is felt by some minds,

minds, will be the subtlety and acuteness with which its indulgence is defended. For before men are subdued so thoroughly by their passions, as to permit these to dictate a system of principles suited to their conduct, they attempt to reconcile, by every plausible argument that reflection may suggest, certain deviations from rectitude, occasioned by the prevalence of one passion, to the temperate dictates of reason; and investigate every motive that is brought to oppose their desire, with a severity that is increased by the strong inclination they feel to look upon it as irrational.

In this situation therefore, objections different from either of the former kinds will naturally be proposed against our philosopher's own arguments, which ought on that account to arise from a thorough knowledge not only of the subject in general, but of the nature and effects of that powerful propensity whose exercise he proposeth to limit. But how shall he be enabled to carry on such cogent and forcible reasoning as must here be requisite?—Undoubtedly by being capable of placing

himself, by an effort of imagination, in the circumstances of him who is strongly actuated by a particular passion; and by feeling (if we may thus express it) its temporary influence. Thus he will be able as clearly and forcibly to expose the effects of particular passions when indulged to an extreme, as by superseding every objection he would most effectually accomplish the purpose that is ultimately kept in view.

But by what power of the mind is this end brought about?—Not surely by the understanding alone. For if it be necessary that he who describes the effects arising from indulged passion, should place himself in the circumstances of a man who is strongly actuated by it; this faculty, whose procedure is cautious and deliberate, would fail of presenting situations of this kind with sufficient strength and comprehension to do justice to each. Men of judgment (in the proper acceptation of that term) who have themselves very moderate passions are surely ill qualified to describe an excess which they never felt; or in other words, to do justice to a sub-
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ject into which they are not qualified to enter. Their account therefore of it could not be such as would exclude the objections of those who more thoroughly understood the question. It is, as we have observed, by an effort of imagination which always gives strength to the passions, that circumstances of the present kind are represented with adequate energy. These when placed in a strong point of view by it, are disposed in such a manner by the faculty of reason which accompanies the whole likewise with such just observations, as carry conviction most powerfully to the mind. But as neither power can accomplish this end separately it must obviously be effected by that influence of both, which we have shown to constitute Discernment. It is therefore this mental power whose nature and province we have endeavoured to lay open; that suggests often the happiest method of treating a philosophical subject, fixeth on the most decisive evidence, selects the most significant illustrations, and most completely obviates objections.

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In the whole conduct of this procedure we must observe, that though the concurrence of reason and imagination existing in an eminent degree is necessary to effectuate the purposes here mentioned. Yet the principal exertions are made by the former. The latter (as we shall see afterwards) though making much more strenuous efforts in other departments of literature, and such as obviously point to it as their original; yet is limited here in its range, and fixed down to the contemplation of such objects only as the understanding admits to have propriety in the investigation of truth. It may therefore be adequate to these ends though conferred in a very inferior degree to that with which it co-operates; and in any case must act according to established and determined rules.

III. Having thus endeavoured to point out particularly the nature and characteristic marks of philosophical Discernment, it remains only in order to complete our view of this faculty, that we consider its influence when the reasoning and inventive

tive powers are more adequate to each other; or at least when this last in whatever degree it takes place, extending its survey under the direction of judgment to a greater variety of objects than in the former instance; the mind judgeth as properly of what is beautiful in the arts, as of what is just and decisive in the researches of science. This branch of our subject we shall have occasion to discuss so much at large in a subsequent section, when we come to trace that combination of the intellectual powers which gives rise to the arts of poetry and criticism; that we shall only make some general observations here in order to determine the peculiar province and importance of the faculty, whose nature and offices we have endeavoured to display. Let us then consider in what manner he who possesseth a great and proportioned share both of understanding and of imagination, will form his estimate both of the *genius* of an author, and of the excellence or defects of a performance in which this uncommon character is displayed.

1. Discernment we have already seen, is distinguished by no circumstance more remarkably than its power of entering into a character, when supplied only with slight materials, and such as an ordinary mind would wholly overlook. Its effects considered in this point of view are uniform. It is the same sagacity by which, in the commerce of life, a man judgeth of the heart or intentions of another from openings that escape the greater number of mankind*; which, transferred to Composition, renders him a judge of the degree in which the intellectual powers subsist, and of their particular propensity from small, and, as they might be deemed, frivolous indications. Thus it is that a discerning critic, attentive to the first dawning of genius, will discover in a few loose thoughts thrown out without much connection, the characters of an accurate or comprehensive understanding; and from a few strokes in the same manner of pathos or of description, will judge of the future

* See sect. i. p. 11. and sect. iv.

extent, fertility, and even of the characteristical bias of imagination. The circumstances from which a penetrating judge will form his opinions on these points vary according to the strength of his discernment, and the faculty that influenceth his decisions. Some of these are, the models or patterns which a young genius selects for imitation, the vein of reflection into which he falls most naturally, as either carried on with close philosophical accuracy, or laying open, though without much regularity the internal feelings and affections; the images employed for illustration, as either drawn from remote sources, or from the simplest forms of external nature:—in fine, the expression of a work as either florid, creeping, correct, or inflated. From these and other circumstances, which we need not mention more minutely, the superior faculties when acting in vigorous concurrence form a judgment of the character while yet but beginning to open, which we pronounce to arise from intellectual Discernment.

As

As imagination must make a strenuous effort in the mind that judgeth from these circumstances of a character, it must be proportioned in degree to the understanding, which last, when greatly superior in this respect, is apt to repress the ardor of its companion, and alter the manner of its procedure.

2. It is in consequence of a similar combination that we judge properly of the excellence or defects of works in which genius is displayed. As this extraordinary character is principally said to take place from the prevalence of effects that owe their origin to imagination; this power it undoubtedly is that feels their full force, and when united with that of reason, enables a man to discern their expedience in the various species of Composition. The man of Discernment therefore, when judging of works that are distinguished by ingenuity, is he who by the exercise of an imagination congenial to that of the author, is powerfully impressed by strokes that have original beauty; and is qualified

to observe the heightning which this beauty receives from corresponding diction, fitness of illustration, and viewed as connected with other circumstances from propriety of disposition. A more particular account of the manner in which the discerning faculty operates in the extensive field that is here opened to it, belongs more properly to a subsequent section.

We have now endeavoured to lay before the reader such observations on the nature of this power of the mind in general, and of its more peculiar influence on the present subject in particular, as that he may judge of its manner of forming decisions, as well as of their justness and importance. The author of this essay is no friend to the practice of *multiplying distinctions* upon every occasion, as these are often subservient to no other end than that of perplexing, instead of informing the mind, and are indeed introduced principally at many times, perhaps to bring the writer off when he is embarrassed, or to gratify his vanity. When merely nominal, they
are

are specious trifles. But when they serve to mark that point at which objects of similar natures differ essentially from each other, they are of real utility, as they at the same time enable the mind to think with precision, and enlarge its sphere of investigation. The use of a just distinction becomes still more conspicuous than in this general instance, when the things distinguished from each other are to be considered as the causes of various and important consequences, which last cannot otherwise be traced up to their proper originals. From his belief that this is necessary in the present case, the author has taken a larger view of the sphere appropriated to the discerning faculty than of any other intellectual power, and such as is not *wholly* prescribed by his subject. He hath so often observed the term *discerning* applied to denominate a simple act of the understanding by philosophers, and the effects of both powers ascribed indiscriminately to one, that an attempt to lay open their distinct natures, provinces, and manners

ners of operation, he hopes may be of some use, if not as a full display of the subject, yet as an opinion that may be followed into a larger and more diversified field by those who study the philosophy of the Mind.

S E C T I O N V.

Of the Use of Memory in Composition.

OUR view of the intellectual powers as employed in Composition, would justly be deemed incomplete, if we do not consider that by which ideas are treasured in the mind, and without whose influence the others can effectuate no purpose. The importance of this valuable quality in all cases whatever is indeed so obvious, that it hath been the care of mankind in every age to extend its influence where it is originally vigorous, or to supply its weakness where it is naturally deficient. Whether indeed we behold it as the parent of experience, and by that means of such in-

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vestigation as is derived from this source *, or as a requisition particularly necessary to such as would excel in arts that include a compass of diversified objects †; whether we view it as an indication of, and attendant on genius ‡, or finally, when improved to the utmost by art, as capable of being rendered subservient to purposes the most beneficial §;—in all these senses its various

* Γίνεται δ' εκ της μνημης εμπειρια τοις ανθρωποις. Αι γαρ πολλαι μνημαι τε αυτεπραγματος μιας εμπειριας δυναμιν αποτελουσι· και δοκει σχεδον επισημη και τεχνη ομοιον ειναι η εμπειρια· Αποβαινει δ' επισημη και τεχνη δια της εμπειριας τοις ανθρωποις, &c. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. Μεταφυσικ. Βιβ. Α. Κεφ. α.

† “ Quid dicam de thesauro rerum omnium memoria? quæ nisi custos inventis cogitatisque rebus & verbis adhibeatur, intelligimus omnia, etiam si præclarissima in oratore peritura?—Quamobrem mirari desideramus quæ causa sit eloquentium paucitatis.” Cicer. de Orat. lib. i.

‡ “ Memoria autem facit etiam prompti ingenii famam, ut illa quæ dicimus non domo attulisse, sed ibi protinus sumpsisse videamur, quod & Oratori, & ipsi causæ plurimum confert.” Quint. Institut. lib. ii. cap. 11.

§ “ Necque tamen ambigimus, quin possint præstare per eam (Memoriam scilicet) nonnulla mirabilia & portentosa.” Bac. de Augmen. Scient. lib. v. c. 5.

offices

offices will require explanation as a necessary branch of the present enquiry. Before, however, we consider this faculty as more immediately regarding Composition, it will be proper to make some general observations on its nature and effects.

1. It is commonly thought that a memory uncommonly extensive, if it is not incompatible either with solidity of judgment, or with vigour of imagination, yet is rarely united with these in any eminent degree *. This maxim however, supported as it is by custom and prepossession, is one of those which will not stand the test of close investigation. Thus far indeed, we may allow the last part of it to be well founded, that men of abstracted and speculative minds appear often to be absent and inattentive to common occurrences:—the incidents about which the busy part of mankind are interested, make but a very flight impression on their

* — in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.

POPE.

thoughts, and are therefore soon erased beyond the power of recollection. But this, when properly examined, will be found to proceed not from a defect of Memory, but from want of attention. The speculatist who found this charge brought against him might with great justice retort the accusation, by saying, that the same defect of remembrance which might be imputed to him in the one of these provinces, would be transferred to his accusers in the other. Nay, in this last case, the charge will fall much more heavily upon the man of the world (as he is called) than in the former upon the man of speculation, as the former would probably be much more deficient in recollecting abstracted truths which he had read with listlessness; (even supposing him to have comprehended these) or even a stroke of pathos which he had passed over without emotion, than the latter would be in recalling to his memory events, in which, however unimportant, he must after all be interested in some degree as a member of society.

These

These general remarks on the power of recollection will explain to us the reason for which it is considered as more mechanical than any of the others, and more susceptible of improvement from application and exercise *. To accomplish this end
nothing

* This consideration has given rise to those expedients for extending memory, which, when rightly used, are indeed extremely valuable, but when the understanding is defective render a man contemptible. “*Nam ingentem numerum nominum (says the penetrating philosopher formerly quoted) aut verborum semel recitatorum eodem ordine statim repetere aut versus complures de quovis argumento ex tempore conficere, aut quicquid occurrit satyrica aliqua similitudine perstringere, aut seria quæque in jocum vertere, aut contradictione, & cavillatione quidvis eludere, & similia (quorum in facultatibus animi haud exigua est copia, quæque ingenio & exercitatione ad miraculum usque extolli possunt) hæc certe omnia, & his similia nos non majoris facimus quam funambulorum & mimorum agilitates & ludicra. Etenim eadem ferme res sunt, cum hæc corporis, illa animi viribus abutantur; & admirationis forsitan aliquid habeant, dignitatis parum.*” *De Augment. Scient. ubi sup.* From this passage, which is worthy of its author, we may judge in what manner memory will exert itself when the superior faculties of the mind are deficient, and thus
Q 3 distinguish

nothing is more necessary than that a man should be able to transfer his attention from one set of objects to another, not perhaps originally so agreeable, but to which he becomes so much reconciled by inflexible perseverance, that what was at first the effect of necessity becomes at last the object of deliberate selection. The same motive therefore by which he was impelled to one pursuit taking place with

distinguish its effects when it is a repository of indiscriminate ideas thrown together without order or proportion; from its real utility when (though perhaps equally extensive as in the former case) its ideas are properly regulated by a clear and comprehensive understanding. From its precipitance and trifling in the first of these instances, it is however somewhat too hasty in concluding, as we are apt to do in general, that because Memory may sometimes contribute to show the defects rather than the excellence of a character, that therefore a very large proportion of it indicates the weakness of any intellectual power whatever. This habit of drawing general conclusions from one or two particular instances, will open an inlet to a variety of errors, and is equally unjust in most cases as it would be to conclude, that every man who practised the duties of religion was an hypocrite, because a few had concealed many vices under the masque of devotion.

regard

regard to another, the memory becomes at once a lasting repository of new ideas, and is thus gradually rendered comprehensive by an easy and imperceptible process.

Supposing then this useful power of the mind to receive improvement more or less durable, in proportion to those degrees of attention which different pursuits are calculated to excite, it is obvious that its principal dependence must be upon that faculty whose peculiar province it is to *arrest attention* by energy, pathos, and vigour of description.—So far therefore is memory from being impaired by strength and exuberance of imagination, that the beams of this sun serve to give strength, expression, and duration to its figures rather than to melt these away, (as Pope most poetically expresseth it) and its objects like diamonds of the purest water, reflect the ray with advantage, from which was originally derived their consistence and beauty.

A very plain example will serve to illustrate the preceding observations. A man of taste and judgment who is at one time entertained by the recital of a beautiful

poem in the closet, and at another by hearing an elegant and judicious sermon from the pulpit, will perhaps (though his opportunities are the same with regard to both) remember afterwards many of the most striking passages of the former, when those of the latter are wholly obliterated.—Supposing however the preacher to be a man of a character in all respects precisely similar to his own, I would ask, from whence does it arise that his memory is more tenacious than that of the former, and that perhaps only in the sphere in which he is interested by his profession? It will be acknowledged readily, that a public speaker will not only retain what he has composed himself and has impressed upon his memory by application, but that strokes of eloquence, which another might overlook, will be recollected by him, and will form the models of his imitation. Is it not evident that the former of these, being left wholly to his own direction, finds those objects make the deepest impression that are illustrated by the colouring of imagination; while the latter being
compelled

compelled to strike into another path, finds his powers of recollection improved by exercise in the one sphere, while these at the same time are in no degree weakened in the other?—In both these persons however (supposed to be naturally of characters precisely similar) the mind will retain unalterably its original bias, and though susceptible in one case of more diversified objects, yet will still be most easily impressed by those on which *poetic* expression, or strength of imagery confers peculiar significance.

It is therefore obvious that as Memory is by no means naturally subversive either of judgment or imagination; so these on the other hand are so far from being incompatible with it, that this last acquires its extent by an effort of the one, and becomes tenacious of particular objects in consequence of being accompanied by the other. In fact, nothing is more ridiculous than those idle, and frequently affected complaints which many persons make so often of their defect in remembrance. Because perhaps they may have known men
eminently

eminently possessed of this power who enjoyed at the same time no proportioned share of such as are deemed more essential, they absurdly conclude that the united concurrence of all is never to be expected; and by giving up all pretensions to that which nature has conferred upon them, they may in reality be disclaiming the only quality by which they were entitled to approbation or esteem. Such men ought to reflect that as memory becomes comprehensive where it is originally weak by a steady and resolute exertion of reason, and as it never fails where imagination subsists in any high degree to retain those strokes of nature and passion of which it is the parent; so the man who proclaims his defect in this faculty acknowledgeth at the same time the want or weakness of the others.

2. When from considering the advantages of memory in general, we come to view it more particularly as it regards Composition, the importance and indeed necessity of acquiring by the method already suggested as large a proportion of it

as possible will appear, whether we recollect the advantage an author receives from being able readily to remember the sentiments of others when his thoughts are employed on subjects similar to theirs; or when we consider the benefit incomparably greater arising to a man of reflection and discernment, from being able to recall upon every suitable occasion those sentiments to his memory which his own experience of mankind may have formerly suggested.

With regard to the former of these objects, let a man's natural powers in general, and that of invention in particular be ever so eminent, yet the knowledge of what hath been advanced on any subject whatever by men of acknowledged abilities must be highly beneficial, whether he collects from these, observations by which the errors of his predecessors may be corrected, obtains patterns of imitation for himself, or, finally, from hints carelessly thrown out without any accurate investigation of consequences is able to extend the empire of Science, and lays the foundation of some new and ingenious hypothesis.

thesis. In these cases a Memory tenacious of such objects as had formerly arrested his attention, and ready to suggest an opposite and corresponding train of ideas tending to confirm some proposition of which he might have been dubious, from the writings of others; removes at once that diffidence with which the modest and ingenuous are apt to propose their own sentiments when these have the appearance of singularity, and enables an author to pursue his research with confidence and satisfaction.

A little reflection will show us likewise that this power has effects in every branch of Composition that requires it to be cultivated with the greatest assiduity. It was observed formerly when we were explaining the nature of invention, that “this term in its most abstracted sense can with regard to the human mind have no significance or propriety whatever*.” Every effort of this kind, in the art of which we treat, is in fact an improvement (or an attempt to improve) on some prin-

* Sect. iii. p. 101.

ciples that have formerly been laid down, some system embraced by our predecessors, some truths half opened, but not accurately followed out through a train of consequences by those who from the imperfections of human nature, rather than from any defect of their own faculties (considered as human) were able just to disclose a path to their successors, without examining, or indeed discerning themselves the various scenery to which it would naturally open. The first step once made, every succeeding improvement is effectuated with comparative facility. The persons who make these are unquestionably in many instances objects of esteem, and even of admiration to mankind; but to what power of the mind is it owing that a man is able to recall at any time to his thoughts the principles, whether simple or complicated, from which his inventions derived their origin; and by whose influence is he enabled to follow out the comparison betwixt causes and their effects?—Undoubtedly he is in all this principally assisted by the faculty of recollection, by which objects are presented

presented to the understanding loose indeed, perhaps, and forming at first view no very close or accurate combination; but which are still the real, though rude materials, from whose union arise the justest and most elegant proportions.

Every art and science whatever advanceth to perfection by a slow and almost imperceptible process. To trace indeed either one or other, through its various transformations to its original draught (if I may so express myself) in the mind, however it might contribute to gratify curiosity by opening a set of new and extraordinary combinations, yet would be an attempt wholly impracticable, as the origin of arts, like that of nations, is involved in impenetrable darkness. In these however, reflection will convince us that artists of all denominations have formed one great body; in all nations whatever, cemented by the most intimate union, and maintaining a dependence on each other not arising from the local influence of laws, fashions, or what we call national prejudices, which are at the same time limited,
and

and perpetually varying; but from a natural conformity of sentiment and character whose effect is instantaneous, and its operation universal. In this immense republic, constituted of so many members disjoined by climate, custom, manners, and language, Memory is the bond or cement by which the parts are held in connection with each other, and a proportion is observed to take place upon the whole. To an improvement thus universal, though at the same time slowly and gradually carried on, all civilized nations will not only be found to have contributed largely at different periods, but individuals likewise derive advantage from the writings, as they frequently do from the characters, of their predecessors, with whose real utility they are not sufficiently acquainted. Thus the sentiments of a Greek or Roman author when transfused from their original, of which a writer may have very imperfect ideas, into a language which he thoroughly understands, become beneficial to him in the highest degree, when his memory suggests these as tending to support some particular

ticular train of reflection; or when his view of a subject in consequence of this recollection is rendered comprehensive*.

Here

* An author of distinguished eminence observes with great propriety on this subject, that "whatever
 " is very good sense must have been common sense in
 " all times, and that what we call learning is but the
 " knowledge of the sense of our predecessors. They
 " therefore, who say our thoughts are not our own
 " because they resemble the ancients, may as well say
 " our faces are not our own, because they are like our
 " fathers." Pope. This observation is as just as it is
 happily illustrated, for there is an obvious difference
 betwixt copying the sentiments of the ancients, and
 adopting such as are similar to theirs. In the first case,
 an author by either borrowing indiscriminately the
 thoughts of those admired writers, or by a *servile* imi-
 tation of their *manner*, betrays undoubtedly barrenness
 of invention, and a mind afraid to venture beyond
 certain limits, like a novice detained by fear within a
 magical circle. On the contrary, a *similarity* whether
 of sentiment or manner in this instance does honour
 to a writer as indicating a corresponding resemblance
 of character, and is to be considered as a proof that
 men of good sense, in all ages, have agreed in the
 general tenor of their sentiments on the same subjects,
 though their manner of illustrating these, the inferences
 deduced from general principles, their method of de-
 tailing a subject, and the expression in which their
 thoughts are conveyed are extremely different. It will
 be

Here therefore new avenues of thought are opened, an inadequate detail is corrected, enlarged ideas occur to the mind as its principal powers arrange and improve upon the objects presented by the last mentioned faculty; and an individual receives innumerable benefits from this general circulation of sentiment, while he is ignorant of the particular source from which these are derived.

The principal beauties in the art of Composition was it possible to trace these accurately to their originals, would be discovered to arise (at least in many instances) from sentiments, images, or illustrations which we have met with in the course either of our reading or conversation; but having impressed our minds very slightly at the time, are afterwards secretly retained in the memory unknown to ourselves, and

be observed, that we speak here of *indiscriminate* borrowing, and of *servile* imitation. In other cases (such as those above enumerated) the introduction of either proof or illustration from any writers of eminence, whether ancient or modern, is not only necessary but commendable.

are either recollected when our thoughts are afterwards employed on some similar subject as *wholly our own*; or become the causes (however imperceptible to us) of our falling into a certain series of thought, of reasoning with justness, and of painting with mastery. It is happily not possible in the last mentioned instance, particularly to charge an author with *plagiarism* (the usual recourse of those who limping themselves upon the crutches of antiquity, judge it impossible for others to walk without these) because the phraseology of his original will not be adopted, and the point of resemblance must lie in some very minute circumstance.—In all these instances, however, as well as when sentiments tending to confirm our own opinions are openly selected for the purposes above-mentioned, the advantages of an improved memory need not be pointed out.

3. We proceed therefore to observe, that as this faculty is of great importance by enabling an author to acquire real benefit from the sentiments of others, so it will appear to be of still greater consequence, when

when we consider it as retaining those which his own experience of mankind may have suggested to him in the commerce of life. That knowledge of mankind which can only be acquired by long and deliberate attention, is evidently subservient to no material purpose of any kind, unless when memory is improved in such a manner as to present (when these can be turned to advantage) such reflections as may have arisen from various occurrences. Discernment, with materials of this kind laid before it, acts immediately in its proper sphere, when it selects from these such as tend most immediately either to establish a theory, or to regulate practice. It is true, indeed, that many events, comparatively insignificant, will be wholly obliterated from the mind; that many reflections, of no consequence to promote its ultimate purpose, will pass superficially over it without ever being recalled; that, in short, many occurrences deemed by some persons of the most indispensable consequence, will be cancelled from the memory when it is stored with such ideas as may

be turned in this manner to real utility: and this perhaps suggests the true reason why men of understanding, or of penetration, are so often judged to be deficient in remembrance. Common ideas, like inferior expressions in a masterly drawing, are struck out at once from the field; but their place is supplied by such strong, significant, and animated characters as no time can efface, and whose arrangement promotes the purpose of entertainment or instruction, as they may be directed by the governing power.

It will be said, and we acknowledge with truth, that Memory appears in all this process of the same value only as a store-room, which, though capable, when it is of proper dimensions, to contain a large proportion of materials, yet is neither sensible of the value of these, nor capable to regulate their disposition with accuracy. The utility however of this intellectual repository must be seen in the same light by the philosopher as that of the former (to carry on the metaphor) is by the man of business, as neither of these can prosecute

secute his trade without the possession of so necessary an implement, and both require this reservoir to be enlarged as their various spheres of intercourse or experience become more extensive and open. It is in all cases whatever only principally requisite that in the acquisition of knowledge of whatever kind, a due attention be paid to the understanding by whose superior operation symmetry of parts is to take place on the whole. We may, no doubt, overload the memory with a multitude of incoherent ideas, which the judgment of a writer is unable to place in any exact disposition, as well as give the latter too little exercise where it might make a strenuous exertion, by too scanty and disproportioned a share of materials. The end of instruction is undoubtedly marred in either of those cases, though much more effectually in the first case than in the last. Obscurity at least, if not utter confusion and absurdity, must take place when the mind, like the body couching beneath an heavy burthen, is overpowered by conceptions half-formed, and jostling out each other ;

as imagination can at such a time be impressed but slightly by any ideas, and judgment must be unable to select from so many discordant objects, such as are best adapted to particular purposes. This effect is sometimes occasioned by making too much use of the various methods by which men have attempted to extend the power of Memory, or to supply its defects*.

We

* The illustrious author whom we quoted above, mentions two methods by which an artificial memory may be acquired. The first rule he prescribes is that the mind should be habituated to contemplate objects as standing in a certain order with others whose affinity is most obvious, rather than to view either of these without this relation. This is what he calls *prænotio*; and he observes, that by such a perception, the man is kept from wandering in the regions of infinity; and if memory does not immediately present the desired idea, yet it falls into the proper train of discovering it. The other he suggests, is that the mind should represent intellectual objects rather *emblematically* than as these really are, by which means becoming at once, in some measure at least, the objects of sense, they strike the memory more forcibly than otherwise, and are recollected with facility. This last method it probably was by which the Corsican, mentioned by Muretus, repeated with ease some thousands of words in different languages, which had no connection with each

We are often however grossly deceived when we pronounce, as we are ready to do from instances of this nature, that the principal powers of the mind are really weak in proportion as Memory is comprehensive. In fact, the only inference arising from this train of observation is, that no degree whatever of intellectual qualities can exempt a man from falling into errors and inconsistencies, when the disproportion betwixt these is remarkably obvious. In this case the balance of the mind is destroyed; and though neither a compre-

each other, immediately after he had heard these pronounced; each having probably recalled to his memory some sensible object by which he had been accustomed to represent it. We have many other examples, both ancient and modern, of men some of them (as the celebrated Cinzas) of distinguished genius, who have carried this art to the highest perfection. After all, however, the former of these rules is undoubtedly, by far the most eligible, as affording exercise to the understanding, whose ideas (as long as the relation betwixt objects is kept in view) will be constantly distinct and explicit: by the latter (when abused as in the preceding instance) a man will acquire memory to the same purpose as a parrot is taught language, and will be only more valuable in proportion not to the choice of his subjects, but the number of his words.

hensive memory, nor a luxuriant imagination, can (as we have already seen) be said to argue a defective understanding, yet we can have no surer test of a judgment adequate to every purpose in the province of Composition, than when this last appears to have the images of the former and the treasures of the latter (considered as the parent of experience) subservient in such a manner to some general purpose as that each may alternately concur to elucidate and confirm its principles.

SECTION VI.

Of the various Combinations of the intellectual Powers in the different Species of Composition.

A Curious reader will naturally be led to enquire from the conclusion of the preceding section, what is understood by *the balance of intellectual powers*, whether this can be gained, and what are the methods most expedient to acquire it.

These

These points, as of the most essential importance, we shall endeavour to obviate in a subsequent section:—in the mean time it is necessary, before we proceed to these questions, that after having considered each faculty of the mind as occupying a separate province in the art of Composition, we should take a view of all these as exerting united influence not merely on the art in general, but on the parts of which it is constituted, requiring a combination varied in proportion to their different natures, tendency, and design.

1. To examine particularly every species of Composition, with regard to that union of intellectual powers from which its origin is derived, is not necessary upon the present occasion, because some of these (however different when viewed as distinct branches of the art) yet have their original in common from the same concurrence of faculties, varied only from each other not in their manner of exertion, but wholly in the degrees in which these subsist. Thus under the general denomination of poetry, considered in the present point of view,

we

we may include at the same time the various species of it as indicating universally the union of judgment and imagination, though by no means always in the same proportion; and the sister art of eloquence from which in point of original it hath no peculiar mark of distinction. Philosophy on the other hand, as a science comprehending diversified subjects, sometimes demanding an high exertion of the inventive power, and at others indicating only the existence of reason, whose proof is carried on without the aid of the latter, will require to be more particularly considered. History, fable, and criticism, (the latter more immediately as connected with taste) will fall under a separate examination, with which we shall sum up the enquiry.

It will occur very readily to a considerate mind, that to distinguish with precision betwixt similar objects, to detect fallacy in an argument or opinion, when this is artfully concealed by a plausible representation, to establish criteria by which judgment may be regulated, and, finally, to exhibit in exact and perspicuous disposition

disposition such abstracted ideas as it requires the nicest perception to develop with accuracy:—that a procedure of this kind, when properly conducted, indicates no common share of that discernment whose nature and operation we have attempted to point out as far as relates to the present subject. From what hath been already advanced on the last mentioned topic, we may conclude that penetration as requisite for these purposes, must be constituted indeed of understanding, but may be exerted without any proportioned share of the other qualities by which in general we have seen it to be distinguished. The truth of this remark will be obvious, if we consider more particularly that process of ideas in the mind by whose union the ends which it is proposed to obtain in this branch of philosophy, may be most easily and completely effectuated.

When in consequence of close and comprehensive investigation, a theory is gradually formed, and the mind proceeds deliberately to accomplish a purpose remote perhaps, and difficult to be reached as it
may

may appear at first view; a train of intermediate ideas are gradually presented as its enquiry is carried on, by which its approach to this end is facilitated, and the object of research is more distinctly perceived, and is examined with greater accuracy as the distance lessens at which it was originally beheld. By this manner a mind intent upon the discovery of truth, and fixing its whole attention upon one purpose, can survey in distinct points of view the means as distinguished from each other, by which its aim is to be obtained, and thus can detect such fallacies by minute inspection as are necessarily overlooked in a general estimate however accurate and judicious. Imagination, from what hath been already observed on its manner of operation, must of all other powers be most unfit for a process of this nature; and the discerning *faculty* as formed by the union of both judgment and fancy, we have seen in general to be characterised by perceiving a few strong and decisive criteria, or by selecting a few essential circumstances to form its estimate;

mate; but not by advancing regularly from one object to another, and by considering separately each particular part, however necessary to constitute a whole. Discernment therefore, will enable the philosopher to observe the end of his search as practicable, while it is yet at a distance, and may form this judgment from a train of thought which a common observer might deem extremely remote, and even incongruous to its purpose; but in the selection of subordinate parts, as well as the disposition of these in such progression as leads the mind imperceptibly to the point in view by a consistent and accurate procedure, in these points judgment is required to exert its influence peculiarly; as in all the others it ought eminently to predominate *.

* It was probably from considering judgment in this comprehensive light that Chrysippus is said to have defined it as that power by which the mind, anticipating in some measure the dictates of experience, acquires universal knowledge of the objects that surround it. Ο δε Χρύσιππος κριτηρια φησιν ειναι αισθησιν και προληψιν· εστι δε η προληψις Ενωσια Φυσικη των καθολα. Διογ. Λαερτ. Ζηνω. βιβ. ζ.

Should we therefore be asked to display that combination of intellectual powers which gives rise to the more abstracted branches of philosophical disquisition, and to point out the character which ought to be appropriated to each, it may be replied, that in a mind adapted to the accomplishment of such purposes, imagination ought to be distinguished beyond all other qualities by *acuteness of perception*, and reason by its clearness and precision *. Thus the most acute perception is obviously required to ascertain the precise point in which two objects, to appearance perfectly similar, are distinguished from each other; and clearness of judgment when this distinction is once perceived, to express it with adequate perspicuity.—Let us try an example by which these remarks may be illustrated.—An image and a metaphor will, at first view, be supposed to convey

* Ωςτε οὐδὲν προσδεῖται πραγμάτων ἀγωνίας κερκτημένων, τὸ ὑφέστηκος δὲ τέλος ἐπιλογιζέσθαι καὶ πάσαν τὴν ἐνεργείαν ἐφ' ἣν τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἀναγομέν. Εἰ δὲ μη, πάντα ἀκρισίας καὶ ταραχῆς εἶναι μέγα, &c. Id. *Επίκ. βιβ. ι.*

the same idea to the mind, as both of these are included under the general name of illustration. A philosopher however, of distinguished eminence, not only distinguisheth the one of these from the other, as we have already seen*, but clearly shows us of what the difference consists. “ An image (says he) differs in some respects from a metaphor. When it is said of Achilles *he rushed like a lion*, here is a strong image employed; but when dropping the name of the hero it is only said simply *the lion rushed*, this is a metaphor.” Thus an image is perfect when the similarity betwixt two objects is displayed by having these separately exhibited to view; whereas a metaphor supposeth this resemblance to be universally conspicuous, and mentions only the secondary object of comparison as including the first.

With the same perspicacity does this great genius point out the difference be-

* Sect. ii.

twixt the ends of eloquence and philosophy.—“ Why (says he) do we judge the
 “ sphere of an orator to be different from
 “ that of a philosopher? Is it not because
 “ the latter contemplates *the cause*, while
 “ the former is attentive to *the effect*?
 “ The one tells us of what injustice, for
 “ instance, consists; the other, to what
 “ persons this character belongs. The
 “ one explains the nature of tyranny, the
 “ other illustrates his subject by having
 “ recourse to the tyrant*.” In these ex-
 amples the union of those qualities which
 constitute philosophical discernment will
 be perceived, and the understanding in
 particular as rendering the most minute
 distinctions perfectly intelligible by a hap-
 py application of examples, and perspi-
 cuity of expression. Without therefore
 adopting the opinion of those who consider
 all abstracted philosophy as deprived of

* Διατι του φιλοσοφον τε ρητορος οιονται διαφερειν,
 η οτι ο μεν τι εστι αδικια, ο δε ως αδικος ο δεινα· και ο
 μεν οτι Τυραννος, ο δε οιον Τυραννις. Αριστοτ. Προβλη-
 ματ. τμημ. ιη.

solidity *, and refinement as inconsistent with justness of reasoning, we may surely affirm that an understanding, however comprehensive, that is not able to separate clearly the inferior parts of its theory from each other, is unfit for this branch of philosophical disquisition: and that imagination, in order to be accommodated properly to such subtle investigation, must be directed to select such illustrations as (without regard to sublimity, beauty, harmony or elegance as peculiarly requisite) are suited with the utmost propriety to particular objects. Judgment, it is certain, may possess comprehension without being able to observe the more minute proportions of certain parts; and imagination, extent or sublimity without the power of tracing its objects through every little relation, in the same manner as the mind that plans a

* La philosophie ne devint abstraite que quand elle cessa d'être solide; on s'allacha des formalitez quand'on n'eut plus rien de real a dire, & l'on ne s'avisa de recourir a la subtilité que quand'on n'espera plus faire valoir la raison par sa simplicité. Rap. Reflex. sur la Philos. tom. ii. p. 358.

magnificent structure may overlook the symmetry of a slight decoration; or an eye that contemplates with wonder the extent of the firmament, may be unfit even with the aid of a microscope to mark the various lines in the organization of insects.

II. From contemplating the evanescent objects (as they will be deemed by many persons) of metaphysical speculation, let us proceed to consider with the same view to the faculties of the mind, a branch of this science more easily comprehended as well as universally interesting; I mean what may be denominated the philosophy of the heart. This noble species of the science in question gives scope alternately to every intellectual faculty, and engageth the mind in pursuits which are connected with the most important interests of the whole species.—Before we proceed to consider that combination of these powers which gives rise to this philosophy, let us examine a little more particularly of what it may be said to consist.

As an inlet to any thorough acquaintance with the human heart it is principally

pally necessary that we should have studied the passions with regard to their nature, tendency, and effects. These assume in the various scenes of human life so many different, and upon some occasions seemingly incongruous appearances, that tho' their influence extends universally to every branch of conduct or speculation without exception, yet there is no enquiry in which the mind is more apt to be bewildered, and to fall into error than that which this various research naturally presents to it. The difficulty here ariseth from the complicated nature and affinity of the passions to each other, connected as these are so closely as that causes wholly distinct and remote in reality are yet apt to be confounded together when we judge from their effects. This will be obvious to any person who reflects that ambition and avarice, pride and vanity, malignity and envy, love and pity, with many other combinations of a similar kind, produce consequences so perfectly corresponding to one another, that in characters principally influenced by any of these, a series of

actions is usually necessary to distinguish the principle that is really predominant, from another to which it bears a resemblance. It happens indeed often that the character is formed, and a *ruling passion* is observed to be universally conspicuous in consequence not of any propensity implanted by nature on the mind with particular strength, but merely from certain habits of indulgence. By these a passion weak perhaps originally, or but moderately powerful, hath been called out into exertion more frequently than others, and hath thus imperceptibly acquired that predominance which it gains at last so completely, and displays with such energy. The inferior and subordinate emotions of the heart as variously excited by an irresistible impulse, as it may be deemed, are distinguished by different denominations, as these appear to be more or less subjected to the controul of understanding*.

From

* This is illustrated in the following passage from a philosopher a few fragments only of whose writings have

From the union of these, in which, without eradicating wholly such as are painful, it is principally requisite that a proper temperature should take place on the whole*; from this union ariseth all that variety

have reached the present times. Και καθο μιν αρχεται και αγειται ο θυμος, και α επιθυμια υπο τς λογου εχοντος μερους τας ψυχας, α εγκρατεια και α καρτερικα αγειται τυγχανοντι. Καθο δε μετα βιας αλλ' εκ εκσινως τςτο πρσσουντι καιικι τυγχανονται. Δει γαρ την αρετην μη μετα λυπας, αλλα μετα ηδονας τα δεοντα πρσσειν. Πυθαγορ. Αποσπασ. p. 34.

* Επειδη η τς ηθςος αρετη περι παθεα, των δε παθεων ηδονα και λυπα υπερτατα, Φανερων οτι εκ εν τω υπεξελεσθαι τα παθεα της ψυχης αδοναν και λυπαν η αρετη πεπτωκει, αλλα εν τω ταυτα συναρμολξσθαι. id. ibid. This sentiment the author proceeds to confirm by some very striking and apposite illustrations. Thus he observed that in order to produce health which ariseth from the temperature of corporeal powers, heat and cold, drought and humidity, however pernicious in the extreme, are not to be removed, but to be blended so properly, as that from the concurrence of all may arise an effect of the most inestimable importance. In the most enchanting of all arts likewise that of the musician, those sharp or deep sounds which a man unacquainted with the art might judge to be harsh and discordant, yet when justly modulated in some happily conducted air contribute to render the harmony perfect, and to heighten inexpressibly the ef-

variety of strong, significant, and delicate signatures by which men are in many instances so strikingly discriminated. A detail therefore of these, as exerting separate or united influence on the conduct of mankind, is in fact an history of the human heart; and in order to develop the movements of this complicated machine, the superior powers of the mind, united with exquisite sensibility and comprehensive experience must be kept in strenuous and constant exercise. In order to accomplish this purpose thoroughly, characters must not only be set in opposition to each other, that shades otherwise imperceptible may be accurately delineated; but the passions must be taken separately; their manner of operating in different assemblages exposed; the influence of habit, prepossession, an accidental combination of

fect of the whole piece. In the same manner our author observes that the passions, though these jar indeed and are discordant when viewed merely by themselves, yet when subjected to the controul of reason, afford the most powerful incitements to virtue, and are thus on the whole of the most indispensable utility and importance.

objects,

objects; and such other causes as contribute to form the variety of minds particularly investigated; and an intellectual mirror held up to us, in this manner, in which each individual may have an opportunity to examine his own portrait, to judge of its likeness, and to correct such expressions as he judgeth to be improper, or supply those in which he perceives a defect.

I. An eloquent writer of the present age observes very justly, that, “the understanding and the passions are indebted to each other, much more than moralists are commonly willing to allow; since as the former discovers our wants, and their gratifications in consequence of an impulse from the latter, so these on the other hand take in a greater compass and variety of objects from that knowledge which is acquired by the other*.” Judgment however in the whole process

* Rousseau. See his *Dissert. sur l'inégalité des hommes.*

abovementioned cannot be said so properly to discover original subjects of speculation, as to compare these together with accuracy when they are presented to it, and to observe the precise points of opposition or resemblance. Thus, when in order to form some new assemblage of qualities, the mind recollects the various disposition of these which it observes to have taken place promiscuously among men, the power by whose operation these are exhibited in striking and original combinations is no doubt that of invention: but when the first heat hath subsided, the expedience or incongruity of this assemblage; the strength of particular expressions, and the comparative merit of all, as exhibiting a just or defective imitation of nature; of those points the understanding separately takes cognisance, and its perspicacity is properly ascertained from the proportion of those figures which have passed before it in review.

It is indeed impossible to behold that faculty by which man is distinguished from
from

from inferior animals employed in a sphere more worthy of its efforts, or more justly adapted to display its energy and comprehension than what is here laid before us. The passions of human nature, of whatever denomination, considered as susceptible of the most lively impressions from external objects, are brought before this superior faculty by imagination, which may be considered as their parent, to be followed through all their windings, and the effects arising from each, however complicated, to be traced up to its proper cause.

From such a variety of passions, called up for the purposes abovementioned, reason, when it is required to form just and natural characters from the union of all, proceeds in courses extremely different, as its decisions are impressed by the power that made so many objects fall under its cognisance. In this case a defective understanding appears principally conspicuous from the qualities of the mind, as exceeding (if I may so express myself) their natural dimensions, or forming a
very

very improper combination in particular circumstances for the accomplishment of any rational purpose. Of the first kind are all those passions which are supposed to precipitate a man to extremes * upon almost

* Examples of this kind, readers of a certain class will find in great abundance among the writers of the old romance; among whom nothing is more common than for a hero to run himself through the body upon receiving any piece of disagreeable intelligence, particularly when he is jealous of the fidelity of his mistress; and to be in as little danger of death from a thrust of this nature as from the scratch of a pin. We must however take care not to rank with these, in the present point of view, such writers as Spencer and Ariosto, whose themes are professedly allegorical, and to whom therefore a different standard of criticism must be adapted. The conduct of every author whatever with regard to the persons of his fable, ought to be estimated from the nature of those beings who are his principal actors; and of this last class again we are required to judge, as having a certain, probable, or merely ideal existence. In either of the latter cases (as when giants, magicians, or dragons and hydras are introduced) we impute no defect of judgment to the writer, when we find his actors divested of human passions (at least of the softer and more amiable kind) and actions corresponding to the ideas excited by this description, we view as consequences

almost every occasion, from whose effects it becomes immediately necessary to invent uncommon

sequences arising necessarily from their introduction. It will indeed be said that the last mentioned authors fall into the same error with the former, when they represent men as not only encountering, but obtaining the victory over creatures so greatly their superiors. But a poet whose ultimate aim is to enforce the motives to virtuous conduct by allegorical representation, is undoubtedly free to make use of expedients without censure, which in an account of transactions among merely human agents are certain evidences of defective understanding. Thus therefore the invulnerable Orlando attacking fearlessly whatever beings opposed his intentions, and the red-cross knight restored to instant vigour by falling into the *well of life* after having been wounded and overthrown by a dragon, the fell inchanter who pursued without remorse or pity the virtuous lady or the hardy knight; and the knight stimulated by the passion of love, who devotes soul and body to the service of his mistress; all these it will be readily granted are examples in which nature is overstrained as it were, and her just proportions are disregarded. But without having recourse to the manners of primitive ages, in which the passion of love particularly gave occasion to actions of the most romantic extravagance, it is sufficient to observe that when *the moral* inculcated by allegorical composition (in the illustration of which the understanding of the writer is principally occupied) appears not to be violated, we permit him to use such resources with freedom as are most expedient to his purpose; and fix our attention,

uncommon and often unnatural methods of deliverance. One error it will be observed in this, as in many cases, is the parent of another, and the invention of some strange and incredible interposition in order to rescue some personage from imminent peril, or perhaps almost instantaneously to raise him from death, is in fact a consequence of the same inadequate judgment by which he was permitted to be exposed to that peril, or to be rashly placed in such desperate circumstances*.

Reason

tion, not upon the probable nature of the incidents but upon the doctrine which so many agreeable fictions are adapted to recommend.

* The remarks made on this subject in the preceding note, p. 191. will prevent us in a great measure from extending the charge brought here against the conduct of authors in a certain species of fable to the events that occur in the great standards of the *Epopœa*. In the *Iliad*, Hector, struck down by Ajax, is carried from the field in a deep faint, is laid down by his attendants at a distance from the war, and after his recovery is wholly unable to resume the command of his host. This command however he must necessarily exercise without delay, and his former vigour must be restored in a moment. The poet therefore takes advantage of the received mythology of his country. With that masterly address for which he is so justly celebrated,

Reason when its influence predominates in the mind adjusts the intellectual ballance with more precision and accuracy; and assigning their proper spheres to the pas-

lebrated, he introduceth the supreme deity, whose attention for some time had been purposely called off; as turning his eyes on the chief, whose pains immediately pass away. The god of health descends at his command, and that Hector may be enabled to fulfil his destiny, or rather that the great moral of the fable ΔΙΟΣ ΔΕ ΤΕΛΕΙΕΤΟ ΒΟΥΛΗ, the will of God accomplished, may be inculcated; he is immediately restored to that state in which Jupiter had formerly beheld him. Here therefore there is not only a “dignus vindice nodus,” because a supernatural resource is rendered indispensibly necessary; but the disaster of Hector is brought on by no unnatural straining of character; and the cause in which he fights is such as recommends him to the protection of that power which interposeth for his deliverance. A brave man suffering in the cause of his country is no doubt an object in whose behalf Homer might suppose that being to be interested, who looks not with an indifferent eye upon virtue in distress. The poet however it must be owned was in one circumstance peculiarly favoured by the theological tenets of his countrymen, which permitted him to suppose that the attention of Jupiter might be interrupted; as by ascribing to him an *human passion*, he hath introduced the misfortune and the deliverance of the Trojan prince by a detail, so various, so rich, and expressive of such astonishing invention as succeeding poets must admire, with a despair of being able successfully to imitate.

sions;

sions, however impetuous, permits not the character to be marked by extravagant and unnatural expressions of their power.

This faculty of the mind it is likewise that regulates the general combination of the passions in order to accomplish particular purposes. Thus from a heart in which generosity is joined with ambition, humanity with fortitude, and more masculine passions are tempered happily by clemency and benevolence; from such a heart we expect the forgiveness of personal injuries, the voluntary sacrifice upon urgent occasions of private gratification; pity exercised towards a vanquished enemy, and universal benignity extending to all. Here therefore there is that mutual conformity betwixt the character itself, and the action arising from this temperament of qualities which indicates the prevalence of sound understanding. On the other hand a man whose judgment is inadequate to the task of forming from these materials any just and accurate combination, instead of adapting circumstances to the display of passions

united

united originally for particular purposes, will at every other time be compelled to throw some new ingredient into the portrait of his persons as he is directed by events. It is easy to foresee that inconsistency and confusion must be the consequence of proceeding in this manner, and a motly combination of intellectual and moral qualities assembled together, or which nature amidst all her mild and variegated productions never yet afforded a model of imitation.

Thus far we have endeavoured to mark out precisely the sphere that is occupied by the understanding, considered as unconnected with the other powers (as far as it can be contemplated in this light), with regard to its influence on the qualities of the heart. The observations on this subject have referred principally to the makers or inventors of character, because it is in the writings of these that the branch of philosophy we are here examining is most eminently displayed, and from these therefore may be selected the most striking examples. The same power however which
in

in one mind regulates and adjusts the passions to each other, so as to form upon the whole a natural assemblage, in another takes cognizance of this regulation as just or defective according to its resemblance or dissimilarity to the standard of nature. He therefore who forms the original draught as it may be called from such diversified materials, and he who judgeth with truth and accuracy of its propriety, differ from each other only perhaps in the degree of intellectual merit, and in the objects to which the same qualities receive a direction: in other respects, the poet who by the various assemblage of the passions and affections gives strength, significance, and peculiarity to his characters; the critic who decides of these with propriety from the unerring standard above-mentioned; and the philosopher who, without regard to either, considers their different ends, expressions, and tendency, as forming objects of the greatest importance and utility in his display of the mind; these discover in their various spheres that union of intellectual powers which qualifies

fies for this branch of investigation, and in particular an understanding fitted to form just and decisive observations.

2. Judgment alone, however, though operating as we have seen in a very extensive range even in the present branch of disquisition, yet is employed principally in the task of throwing into just disposition such objects as are placed before it for this purpose. The qualification therefore indispensably necessary to effectuate the full purpose of developing the heart is that discernment constituted by the superior powers in their most vigorous exertion, which we have formerly endeavoured to explain and illustrate.

If it be true (as we are taught by experience) that imagination is the parent of the passions, whose strength is commonly proportioned to its exuberance and vigour, we may then conclude, that a large proportion of it joined to the former (whose office we have attempted to explain) must be conferred, when these springs of human action are pursued through their diversified effects. A man of discernment

obtains this purpose without any tedious process of reflection in most circumstances, because he judgeth immediately, either from experience or comparison. By the former he is enabled to recollect the influence of these on his own mind as acting either separately or in union with each other; while by the latter he can decide in such cases as fall not within the verge of his immediate cognisance, of the consequences arising from any combination whatever on the conduct of another judging in the same or similar circumstances of what he finds within himself.

The judgment therefore that is formed of human nature by a person of this character is usually at the same time just and comprehensive. Just, because derived from no secondary cause it is the immediate result of feeling and experience; and comprehensive, because the subject complex, as it is, is only suited to the mind that surveys it, which far from depending upon conjectural evidence, is able to form an enlarged estimate from those qualities which nature has conferred as the means
of

of its enquiry. In all this process we may observe, that purposes are obtained by what we may call with the strictest propriety philosophical discernment, which dispassionate reason with all its accuracy and attention must ever be unable in any measure to accomplish. For, as a man of weak fancy will be disqualified to trace this power through its highest sphere of excellence, or a man of mere judgment to follow out reason through the labyrinth of intricate and metaphysical deduction; so it is equally impracticable that he whose passions are cold, and his sensibility proportionably deficient, should be able, however high in understanding, to trace from their effects those causes as powerfully influencing the minds of others, which operate so weakly on his own. We can indeed easily conceive a man of this cast as qualified to lay down excellent rules for the government of the passions, to point out the danger arising from their indulgence, and after having descanted on those topics with great justice and propriety, to render each the subject of some general declamation.

tion. Thus a man whose mind was never stimulated by ambition, may display many of the evils of which we know it to be productive; as he in the same manner who has no great propensity to practise candour, benevolence, or friendship himself, may yet enumerate many advantages derived from these with unexceptionable accuracy. But in such frigid detail (of which, was it necessary, we might adduce many examples from moral writers both ancient and modern) that “*vivida vis animi*,” that piercing energy of thought, by whose means the influence of one passion upon another is exposed in such a manner as to strike out some peculiar expression which the mind instantly appropriates; this is wholly wanting, and the defect is by no means compensated by exact disposition, perspicuous language, and even by what may be deemed a more valuable acquisition than either of the former, an extensive intercourse and knowledge of mankind.

In general we may lay it down as a maxim, which will be found to hold good with very few exceptions, that where the
mind,

mind, instead of searching its subject to the bottom, runs into loose declamation; and when it ought to investigate a *cause*, expatiates only pompously upon the effect; in these cases a defect of intellectual powers is commonly indicated, or at least an understanding disqualified to exhibit an adequate representation of the object which it proposes to contemplate. A man of real discernment not only shifts upon all sides, as it were, every successive prospect that passeth before him, but for the time is really actuated by the passion he describes, or influenced in some measure by the motives he enumerates. By an exertion of the superior faculties acting in concurrence, he is able alternately to examine the selfish, as well as more benevolent affections in their various modes of operation; and thus, by the temporary but powerful influence of these on his own temper, throws out particular and significant criteria, whose truth is not only acknowledged by the judgment, but felt by the heart.

An admired ancient, who himself possessed an eminent share of this discernment, treats another author with just ridicule who had chosen a subject to which he was no way equal. The rhetorician Isocrates introduces a discourse which he composed to convince the Greeks, that they were more indebted to the people of Athens than to those of Lacedæmon, by saying, "That eloquence is peculiarly
 " excellent, because it can depress great
 " actions, and magnify such as are incon-
 " siderable; because it can render old
 " things new, and new old." "Are you
 " Isocrates (says the critic) going to em-
 " ploy this eloquence in ascertaining the
 " comparative merit of the Athenians and
 " Lacedæmonians?—Then you give your
 " reader a warning not to credit a word
 " you may advance on the subject*." What then is eloquence?—Let us hear on this subject a person deeply skilled in the philosophy of the heart.—"An orator he

* Λογικὴ. περὶ ὕψ. τμημ. λη.

" tells

“ tells us has the following great ends to
 “ accomplish. He must conciliate the
 “ minds of his audience by a judicious
 “ exordium, relate facts in a simple man-
 “ ner, confirm these by proof, refute ob-
 “ jections, and after thus influencing the
 “ judgment of his audience, address him-
 “ self finally to their passions *.”—In this
 last sphere of his exertion every part of na-
 ture is to be animated in his discourse †.—
 “ He is to call up the dead, to make his
 “ country itself utter an address to its in-
 “ habitants, as to her degenerate sons;
 “ every thing must live in his descrip-

* “ In omni porro causa judiciali quinque esse partes: quarum exordio conciliari audientem, narratione causam proponi, confirmatione roborari, refutatione dissolvi, animos moveri, &c.” Quintil. Institut. lib. vii.

† “ Hic orator et defunctos excitabit, ut Appium cæcum: apud hunc & patria ipsa exclamabit, aliquemque alloquetur:—hic Deos ipsos in congressum prope suum sermonemque deducet. “ Vos inquam Albani tumuli, atque luci, vos Albanorum obrutæ aræ sacrorum populi Romani focia & æquales! Hic iram, hic misericordiam inspirabit; hic dicet, te vidit, & flevit, & appellavit, & per omnes affectus trahatur*.” Quintil. lib. xii. c. 10.

* Cicer. pro Milon.

“ tion: at one time he is to single out,
 “ and address the criminal; at another to
 “ invoke the groves and altars which he
 “ had polluted. The Gods themselves
 “ are to be introduced into the assembly,
 “ and rendered speakers in his discourse.
 “ Thus (says this consummate judge of
 “ mankind) thus will anger, pity, and
 “ every passion of what kind soever be
 “ alternately excited, and the heart be
 “ rendered susceptible of whatever impres-
 “ sions it may be deemed necessary to ex-
 “ cite.”

This difference, or rather this opposi-
 tion betwixt the Greek and Roman author
 in treating the same subject, serves to il-
 lustrate in some measure the preceding re-
 marks. In the former (whose judgment
 appears not to have been sound enough to
 regulate the sallies of a puerile fancy) we
 observe a propensity to general description,
 and a silly affectation of point and anti-
 thesis, which indicate a mind able only to
 take a superficial and undistinguishing re-
 view. The latter on the contrary becomes
particular in consequence of superior dis-
 cernment.

cernment. His mind appears to have comprehended at one view, not merely the general purpose of the art, but the various means likewise by which this purpose may be effectuated: he has recourse therefore immediately to the examples; and he speaks himself to the passions of human nature while he is describing the art by which these are excited*.

3. To the combination of qualities which we have enumerated as constituting excellence in this noble branch of philosophy; we need only further add, as one adventitious but necessary advantage that experience which indicates a man,

* I know no modern philosophical performance in which the reader will find the qualities abovementioned more strikingly united, than in Dr. Smith's excellent work, entitled, the Theory of Moral Sentiments. This moral anatomist, instead of being satisfied with general exhibitions of his subject, or of running (like the Greek writer abovementioned) into loose declamation, either strikes out in a style of masterly composition such criteria as come home to "men's business and bosoms," and require no illustration; or confirms by such happily selected examples those remarks whose truth is less obviously conspicuous, as (in the author's opinion) evinceth the truest philosophical discernment.

“Qui mores hominum multorum vidit,” who has examined the various manners of mankind. The knowledge derived from this source produceth effects as widely diversified as any species of what kind soever. Thus the consequence of such intercourse upon a mind in which the understanding is superficial, commonly is to produce a profusion of “wise saws,” (as Shakespearé calls them), a number of unexceptionable but uninteresting observations on manners and character; good admonitions, sententious maxims, and rules of life, whose fitness and propriety no man calls in question, because, whether true or false, they reach not the cases of individuals, and therefore become not the objects of investigation. On the contrary when the judgment is good, but the imagination deficient, such remarks as this experience may suggest, however solid, will be uniform, and calculated rather to display one branch of character than to investigate a whole. It is therefore only when this acquisition falls to the share of a mind in which both these powers are concen-

concentrated, and co-operate with each other that the heart of man will be laid open, and such criteria fixed upon as develop the movements however complicated of this various machine.

It would be a matter of no difficulty to show that this facility of entering deeply into the feelings of the heart distinguish principally those authors who will always stand in the highest rank of eminence. Take away the various and exquisite shadings of the characters in the *Iliad*; the talkative experience of Nestor, the wary circumspexion of Ulysses, the noble boldness of Diomed, the implacable rage of Achilles; the fondness of Priam, of Hecuba, and of Andromache, so justly varied, and so delicately painted; take away these circumstances, and the merit of this immortal work would be no more than that of a picture, in which the most luxuriant drapery might adorn objects whose lifeless similarity the eye would soon contemplate with satiety and disgust. He must on the other hand be a very frigid critic indeed who can survey that series of these so nobly supported

supported through the whole of this work, and suppose the author to deserve from this detail no higher praise than that of judgment. Deep penetration, exquisite sensibility, and experience, under the direction of these, of the avenues that lead most directly to the heart, constitute, in conjunction with the most copious imagination, the character of a man capable of conducting a work of this nature. The manner in which these are separately required to operate, and the spheres assigned to each in this work, may be severally collected from the preceding observations.

III. As we have now endeavoured to trace philosophy in its most extensive sense, to its original source in the various combination of intellectual powers; let us proceed to try in this philosophical history (as it may be termed) of the sciences and arts, whether we can observe likewise in some other views of the faculties formerly referred to, the origin of that science which records the various transactions of men from the earliest periods of society.— Before, however, we enter more immediately

diately into this disquisition, it may be necessary to state the difference betwixt the didactic and the narrative manner;

History, when we consider it as the means of conveying instruction by example, must be allowed to possess advantages above the didactic or philosophical manner, proportioned to the degree of influence which example exerts over the practice of mankind beyond that of cold and inanimated precept. The name likewise of a professed teacher carries along with it a certain idea of superiority, which is always admitted with reluctance; and which, joined with the circumstance above-mentioned, acts as a powerful counterpoise, to the good effects of which this science is naturally productive. Sensible of this disadvantage, the most eminent philosophers have, in all ages, endeavoured to compensate it by adopting as far as the severity of their profession would admit, the insinuating graces of sister arts, in the same manner as a man of a coarse and disagreeable aspect will naturally desire to supply the defect of regular features and

com-

complexional beauty, by elegant improvement and a captivating address. For this purpose we not only find the dialogue manner of composition fixed upon by the masters of this science to render their doctrines at the same time agreeable and interesting*; but in the pourtray of scenery†, and even in developing argument, these admit, upon some occasions, figures borrowed from the arts of eloquence and poetry, in whose use they are necessarily required to be sparing from the nature of their subject.

What the philosopher thus obtains with much difficulty, by calling in foreign and

* Of this kind every reader knows are the principal parts of the writings of the great Roman philosopher, as well of the Greek, whom the former professedly imitated.

† Take the following description as an example from the Phædrus of Plato. Η τε γαρ πλάτανος αὐτὴ μαλὰ ἀμφιλαφὴς τε καὶ ὑψηλὴ τὴ τε ἀγρῷ τὸ ὕψος, καὶ τὸ σύσκιον παγκάλου καὶ ὡς ἀκμὴν ἔχει τὸ αὐθαγῆς, ὡς αὖ εὐωδέστατον παρέρχοι τοῦ τόπου. Ἦγε αὖ πηγὴ χαριεσθεῖα ὑπὸ τῆς πλάτανος ῥεῖ μαλὰ ψυχροῦ ὕδατος, &c. There are other fine circumstances in the description of this shade, in which the philosophers recline to discourse of eloquence.

adventitious

adventitious aid, the historian can accomplish with much greater ease, as the materials which he is required to mould into proportion are such as necessarily awaken attention, and engage the mind in an useful and interesting procedure. This circumstance it is that gives the narrative manner so much advantage above the former. In the explication of a philosophical theory, a series of close reasoning or of abstracted observation is carried on; and sentiments connected with, and supported by each other, form the great objects of the work. In history, on the other hand, these as forming in some measure but secondary views, and required to grow out of some preceding narration, arrest the attention of a reader in a very forcible manner, and when judiciously introduced, make a lasting impression on his memory. Thus it happens, that a well written history is more universally useful than any other work. The medium through which instruction is conveyed, we are here disposed to contemplate with pleasure; and while the manners are tinged by the examples exhibited

exhibited in so faithful a mirror*, a sensible mind receives an entertainment of the most agreeable kind, by observing the various operation of qualities both intellectual and moral on the characters of men.

These general remarks on historical composition (the particular consideration of which belongs more properly to a subsequent section) will assist us in ascertaining that union of intellectual powers which is necessary to constitute the perfection of so beneficial a science.

As the historian therefore possesseth advantages from the nature of his profession superior to those of the didactic author, and as his ends may be accomplished with greater facility, it will follow, that a moderate, but as nearly as possible an equal proportion of the powers whose offices we have endeavoured to point out, will be sufficient to effectuate all the purposes to

* “*Historia illustri appellatione donata sit, cum magistra morum nominetur, quod qui ad eam se conferunt, instructi ad vitæ casus, semperque inde meliores abeunt.*” Strad. Prolus. Academ. p. 45.

which

which this science can be rendered subservient. In philosophy the understanding is employed in the selection and disposition of such abstracted ideas as the mind draws from having formed an accurate judgment of its own operation, or from experience with regard to mankind in general. In eloquence the power of invention is eminently displayed likewise, not only as bestowing high and expressive colour on the objects that pass before it, but in fixing upon new topics of persuasion, and pressing these home with that irresistible energy which penetrates the heart. But in history as the judgment employed in the collation of materials supplied wholly by others, exerts not an act equally strenuous, as when it regulates those which owe their existence to the mind's penetrating and intense contemplation of itself; so the imagination in the same manner that works only from facts and incidents laid before it, from which it is not permitted to deviate, displays not the same strength, versatility, and exuberance, as when employed in spheres more justly appropriated

to its exercise, it is with more propriety denominated the *power of invention* *.

History therefore, as it pursues a middle course betwixt the spheres of philosophy and eloquence, demands a share of every intellectual faculty, but no such proportion of any separate power as will turn the balance obviously to a side. The truth of this remark will be acknowledged most readily, when we consider the ends which this writer is required to accomplish.

An historian then ought to possess a clear and solid judgment, otherwise he will not only fail of giving a due proportion to the various members of his work, but

* What we have said here of eloquence may be likewise applied to poetry. “Le merite principal de l'historien (says an elegant critic) ne consiste pas comme celui de poete. Le merite principal de l'histoire est d'enrichir notre memoire & de former notre jugement; mais le merite principal de la poesie consiste a nous toucher.” Ref. Critiques sur la Poef. &c. v. ii. p. 283. Let us hear Aristotle on the same subject. Ο γαρ Ιστορικος και ο ποιητης ε το η εμμετρα λεγειν η αμμετρα διαφερουσιν.—αλλα τωτο διαφερει τω του μεν τα γενομενα λεγειν του δε οιου αν γενοιτο. Διο και Φιλοσοφωτερον και σπυδακιωτερον Ποιησις Ιστορικας εστιν Ποιητ.

unequal particularly to the more difficult parts of his profession, the defect will become remarkably conspicuous when he is required to disentangle truth from a multitude of obscure and perplexing incidents, or to reconcile details of the same transaction that are seemingly contradictory. He ought to possess likewise an adequate proportion of imagination, as without this his composition will have too much uniformity, and he will be unable to treat the different branches of his subject in the manner adapted most properly to each. A considerable share of Discernment is likewise necessary to make him improve upon a distant hint, when he is not furnished with full and digested materials; to assist him in examining characters to the bottom, and in painting these so justly as that they may appear to be inferences deduced from the narration of previous incidents.—In short, that experience of mankind which is acquired by having mixed in society, is requisite to give compass to his views, and to render his obser-

vations on men and things such as characterise human nature; and, to sum up all, strength, and even pathos, is upon some occasions necessary to complete the character of this writer, that he may hold up an action eminently virtuous to the admiration, or a vicious one to the contempt and detestation of mankind!

From this short account of the various purposes of history, and of the intellectual powers as adapted to carry these effectually into execution, it must be evident, that though there are perhaps other departments of literature in which some of the superior faculties act in a larger sphere, or appear in more vigorous exertion; yet there is none more happily calculated to display different kinds, as well as degrees of excellence, by calling every faculty by which the human mind is distinguished, successively into action. These, however, with other advantages of this noble and instructive science, will fall to be more particularly detailed, when from having viewed it in its origin, as indicating a peculiar

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combination of mental powers, we come to consider it in the more extensive light of a species of Composition.

SECTION VII.

Of that Combination of the intellectual Faculties which gives rise to the arts of Poetry and Criticism.

AN ancient philosopher of distinguished name, assigns (I cannot say with what propriety) admiration as the source of philosophy *. Whatever may be in this, we may surely, with at least equal truth, judge it to have occasioned the first poetic effusions †, as in proportion to that degree of this passion with which the mind was transported upon having contemplated the

* Μαλα φιλοσοφον τετο το παθος το θαυμαζειν.
Ου γαρ αλλη αρχη φιλοσοφιας η αυτη. Πλατων. Θεητ.

† Οι πρωτα μεν βλεποντες εβλεπον ματην·

Κλυοντες ουκ εκουον· αλλ' ονειρατων

Αλιγκιοι μορφαισι του μακρου χρονου

Εφυρον εικη παντα.

Αισχυλ. Προμηθ.

works of nature, must have been the sublimity of those divine hymns in which were celebrated the perfections of the author. As soon, therefore, as men began to exercise their reason in tracing at the same time the existence and attributes of the supreme mind, what we denominate lyric poetry received its origin from a warm imagination eyeing the more stupendous works of the deity, and arising from these to contemplate their original.

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ
Accipiant, cælique vias & sidera monstrent, &c.

Geor. ii. 475.

Such glorious objects as these a great genius naturally beholds with that high enjoyment which this power of the mind derives from having dwelt intensely on the sublime and the wonderful. This branch of his subject, however, the author hath treated at such length in a former essay, that it would be wholly improper to resume on the present occasion, what hath already been advanced on it *.

* See Essay on Lyr. Poet. lett. ii.

Supposing

Supposing then this high and enchanting species of poetic Composition to have received its origin and improvement from the cause above-mentioned, let us try whether from different views of the human mind as variously impressed by surrounding objects, we can account for the rise and improvement of those other branches of this art which are considered as the most important.

That desire of imitating*, which our great critic assigns as the source of all poetic excellence, operates upon the mind either instantaneously as the objects of external nature are represented by the senses, and imagination set at work to copy the features of some admired original; or it works from such materials as are more gradually supplied by reflection and experience, and forms by these means repre-

* Εοικασί δε γεννησαι μιν ολως την ποιητικην αιτιας δυο και αυται φυσικαι· το ΜΙΜΕΙΣΘΑΙ ΣΥΜΦΥΤΤΟΝ τοις ανθρωποις, &c. Και αρμονια και ρυθμος εξ αρχης οι πεφυκοτες προς αυτα μαλιστα κατα μικρον προαγουτες εγεννησαν την Ποιησιν. Αριστοτ. περι Ποιητ. κεφ. δ.

sentations of sentiments, characters, actions, and incidents; either distinct from each other, or standing in connection, as beautiful and expressive pictures of the great drama of human life.—To the former of these very little attention will convince us, that we owe the descriptive; and to the latter the more complex species of poetic Composition.

1. Imagination, when it contemplates the objects of descriptive poetry, fluctuates naturally for some time and wanders from one scene to another before a series adapted to its original propensity irresistibly determines its choice; but this little irresolution in the selection of a subject serves only to indicate that no accidental assemblage of external objects, however justly presented by the senses, can arrest the attention of the mind in such a manner as to produce imitation, while the sphere is not justly presented which it is fitted by nature to occupy. As soon as this assemblage occurs, the mind becomes sensible of its strength, and falling at once into its
proper

proper track, surveys the objects with pleasure, and imitates these with facility.

This instantaneous perception, however, of the sphere adapted naturally to its choice, we are not to suppose existing in the mind independently (as some philosophers seem to think that all instantaneous perceptions do) of the faculty of reason*. This power approves without any

* When closely examined, I am persuaded that no philosopher ever meant to consider instinct (as it is termed) and reason as intellectual powers, *really* distinct from, and independent of each other. This distinction however is *seemingly* made by those who define the reasoning faculty to be that by which the mind acquires the knowledge of truth, in consequence of progressionary evidence; and the instinctive or intuitive power is that which decides *instantaneously* of the truth or falsehood of certain propositions, and is termed a *sense*, from this quickness of perception. The following observations are thrown together to prevent readers from misapprehending the meaning of either term, and to shew that no distinction of this kind can possibly subsist.—It is undoubtedly a truth, as clear as any mathematical axiom whatever, that of two objects wholly distinct from each other, we can conceive either to exist separately. If, therefore, there are truths of any kind which this instinctive or intuitive power

any regular series of argument of a choice adapted with propriety to the character; but

power of the mind perceives without the aid of reason, it will follow, that there are propositions so obvious as to be approved by a mind in which this faculty does not exist. Let us take then the simplest of these propositions, that two and two make four;—and suppose it represented to a person not disordered in understanding, but wholly deprived of that faculty; would this intuitive truth be instantly perceived by such a person, or would any idea be conveyed in consequence of repeating it? No man surely will assert that there would. It will perhaps be said, that there is in this reasoning a *petitio principii*; since reason is here without proof supposed to perform the office of this *common sense*, and the example we have adduced is one in which both being annihilated, a mind cannot properly be said to have existence. But we shall be convinced, with a little attention, that the power (whatever designation we apply to it) by which we deduce effects from a cause, or investigate a cause from its effects, is in no other respect different from that sense (as it is called) by which we perceive the truth of the simplest axiom, than as in the former instances it makes an exertion, which in the latter is unnecessary. We have mentioned one proposition purely intuitive. Let us try another, to comprehend which, some degree of reason must be necessary. At a very considerable distance from the shore, I observe a small speck, scarce to be distinguished from a cloud, and about whose nature I remain for some time uncertain.

but it approves in consequence of discerning this propriety, in the same manner as the

tain. Common sense it will be said, or instinct, is the power by which (having once discovered that this is a ship) I know its real to be different from its apparent magnitude, while yet at a distance. Though this is far from being self-evident to me in any sense of the word whatever; yet let us for once suppose it to be so. As the ship draws nearer, and the sails, masts, cordage and mariners, are successively displayed; I become curious to know the cause for which it moves in a particular direction. Here an effect is immediately traced up to its cause, though the process is indeed abundantly obvious. For as soon as it is known that the ship is moved upon the water, by the wind operating in any way whatever, it will follow that its direction must be determined by that of the wind; and as soon as the cause shall cease to operate, the effect (i. e. the motion) arising from it must subside likewise. This is, indeed, somewhat more complex than the proposition that two and two make four:—yet I will leave any reader to determine, whether a person incapable of understanding the former of these truths, would have any distinct idea conveyed to his mind by the latter.—Will it be said that it is instinct or common sense, which equally takes cognizance of both propositions? I shall then be glad to know at what point this intuition stops, and where reason begins. Does it trace effects from any particular cause? or, vice versa, a cause from its effects?—Instinct is then surely not different from reason; and is used only to express the simplest exertion

the eye which decides of minute proportions from an accurate inspection of some particular

ertion of that faculty. Is it again used to signify that *sense* by which the mind perceives the truth of certain propositions which are termed self-evident, because, without any consideration of cause or effect, these are the immediate objects of internal sensation, in the same manner as external appearances are of the senses?—It hath been already shewn, that where the power which traceth the relation betwixt an effect and a cause ceaseth to operate, this instinct immediately subsides along with it; and as neither of these can exist separately, they must in fact be the same.—Was it necessary to pursue this thread of argument still further, we might observe that as this instinct, or common sense, cannot by any operation be distinguished from reason when considered as an internal perception, on the one hand, so neither on the other has it the least connection with, or dependence upon those external organs of perception which we denominate the senses. The eye of an idiot will present to him a tree, a horse, or a wall, as distinctly as that of a wise man; his ear in the same manner will be impressed by sounds. Suppose him to be deprived of either of these senses, the remaining four will still be distinct from each other, and external objects will operate as usual upon their various organs. But does any such distinction as this take place betwixt reason and instinct? When we take away the power which investigates causes and effects, does that remain which perceives the truth of a geometrical axiom in the same manner as hearing when

particular object, observes with ease that harmony which ariseth from a general correspondence of parts in some magnificent structure. The last of these decisions therefore, may with equal propriety be supposed to take place without the inter-

when the sight is removed, feeling when we are deprived of both; and any of the five, when the others are obliterated? The contrary of this we have already evinced.—Upon the whole, this distinction can only be made by those who have not attended properly to the various operations of reason. It may require a long process of evidence to render a proposition obvious to me, whose truth another man may perceive and acknowledge as soon as it is laid down. But does it follow from this, that the faculty of my mind which takes cognizance of this truth is *essentially different* from that which perceives it of his?—Surely not. His understanding in consequence either of its superior comprehension, or of having been long accustomed to a certain strain of observation, may immediately supply the intermediate process by which an end is obtained; but it is still the same power acting in one instance with rapidity, and in the other proceeding with coolness and circumspection, by which both are conducted to the same period. This remark holds equally of every proposition whatever. Intuition, as distinguished from reason, is that power by which a mind is supposed to have before it, at one view, the whole series of causes and effects, and in this sense it can only be predicated of the Supreme Being.

position

position of sight or feeling, as the other without that of understanding.

Led in this manner at last into its proper train, imagination falls immediately to work, to copy such draughts as have made upon it the most lively and forcible impresson. But imagination left to itself would form an imitation which however striking, would rather present a resemblance of some scattered features.

Definet in piscem mulier formosa superne,
than that of a whole proportioned figure; much less a series of these, reflecting mutual light upon each other, and standing in the happiest combination. This harmonious concurrence of objects diversified from each other, to produce one effect on the mind, and the beauty of each object when viewed apart, arising from the light in which this is presented to it, denominates that power of perceiving the justest attitudes, and the most delicate expressions which is known by the name of Taste; and whose influence is peculiarly conspicuous in the delineation of external forms. By this internal sense (as philosophers have

have denominated it) objects are perceived immediately to bear a certain relation to each other, which even the superior faculties of the mind, when considered apart, would have been disqualified to trace; and in the sphere of descriptive poetry it either adjusts the illustrations with elegance and propriety to their corresponding originals when the work is going on; or it qualifies the reader, though perhaps unable himself to execute with correctness and mastery, to judge with the utmost precision of this correspondence, and to feel with exquisite sensibility the effect arising from it. The objects of this quality, and the powers by whose combination it is constituted, we shall soon have occasion to detail at more length;—its influence on this branch of the subject, it is just sufficient to have mentioned.

As it is therefore necessary that a descriptive poet should be capable of perceiving remote connections, and of imitating beauties of which few are qualified to take cognizance; so the effect arising from the union of the reasoning and inventive faculty,

culty, will be as conspicuous in this, as in any sphere whatever. Those moral observations in particular, which are judiciously made to grow out of a description of the external beauties of nature; and which, in consequence of the pleasing scenery that soothes and delights the imagination, convey instruction to the mind at the most favourable moment; discover the writer's judgment by the justness of their disposition, and the consistency they give to his performance; his imagination, by the beauty of that vehicle in which these are conveyed; and his taste, by an happy selection of the fittest words, and a train of sentiment carried precisely to that point where the mind, gratified but not fatigued, returns with pleasure to the principal subject.—Nor is it an inconsiderable or common share of these combined qualities by which excellence in this branch of poetry is constituted. The wild, the sublime, and the magnificent in nature, indicate not, when painted in the richest and most appropriated colours, more grandeur of imagination, and justness of perception, than
the

the purposes which these may be made to serve by inspiring great and exalted conceptions of the Author of nature; or by raising the thoughts above little and transitory objects to the contemplation of such as are noble and eternal; these last discover the compass of an enlightened understanding, operating in a sphere at once dignified and comprehensive. Even in the sport and pastime of fancy, when the simplest beauties of rural scenery are delineated by her pencil, and the simplest occupations are ascribed to the inhabitants, a share of judgment much more considerable than we are apt to suppose is necessary to render the images, sentiments, and expression just such as the subject requires; and an exquisite internal perception of genuine beauty to distinguish elegance from rusticity, and to separate a simple from a florid or insipid imitation.

II. From this detail of the intellectual powers as combining to accomplish those purposes to which a just display of external nature may be rendered subservient, let us follow the mind in the more ab-

tracted contemplation of its own internal operations, and observe the effects that most naturally result from it. By considering in this manner the passions and affections of mankind in distinct points of view, we shall comprehend most readily that union of the nobler faculties by which these are happily imitated, and exhibit striking representations of character and sentiments.

1. As the objects of our senses vary their appearances at different seasons, and present to us aspects extremely remote, if not seemingly incongruous, upon many occasions; the human mind in the same manner, that great object of all our researches, when guided at one time by reason, disturbed at another by passion, and driven at a third by a precipitate and irresistible impulse to some irrational conduct, receives expressions as diversified in every respect as the former, and will make impressions not less various and lively upon an attentive examination. To effectuate by means of these the great purpose of conveying instruction, is equally the ultimate

mate aim of the philosopher and the poet, who in the higher branches of his art unites the ends of philosophy with the more agreeable ones of his own profession. The means however by which these accomplish the same general purpose are very different, and serve to indicate that concurrence of the mental powers by which each of these (the last in particular) ought to be distinguished:

Let us suppose two men with both these characters contemplating the human mind in the earliest period of society, with the view of studying attentively its different phænomena, and of instructing mankind by their observations. The one observing many effects arising from the same general principles variously modified, whose seeming incongruity perplexeth him at first, attempts, as the best method of eradicating the most pernicious, to investigate the cause from which each derives its origin. By accomplishing this purpose he supposeth justly that he will at the same time discover the best means of procuring happiness to himself, and of communicating

this inestimable benefit to mankind in general. Our philosopher therefore engageth from these motives in the search of truth, and in consequence of a knowledge of the human mind, acquired by accurate observation, and rendered comprehensive from experience, becomes qualified to establish rules of conduct, and to fix society by laws that indicate thorough acquaintance with the human heart upon a solid and permanent foundation. Here then we observe the origin of moral investigation. But by what method shall these important ends be brought about? Should we put this question to our philosopher, he would undoubtedly reply;—" I consider man as an intelligent and rational agent, whose judgment it is necessary to convince by evidence before motives of any kind can operate on his practice. To his judgment therefore I appeal, and having first detected the causes of his errors by a clear and accurate investigation; I endeavour to lay before him such rules of conduct as are adapted most properly to remedy his defects, and to

" ascer-

“ ascertain to him the possession of such
“ objects as promise him real and perman-
“ ent felicity*. Of the accuracy of this
“ investigation, and of the importance of
“ those motives by which new principles
“ are enforced; of these circumstances rea-
“ son must finally decide; and I have no
“ other merit than that of presenting to
“ this power such consideration as may
“ determine its choice to the greatest advan-
“ tage.”—Such would be the language of
our philosopher on this subject.—Let us
next attend to the practice of the poet, act-
ing in the higher spheres of his profession
with the same general purpose as the for-

* By some such method as this it must undoubtedly be that philosophy is said to perform the wonders which have been ascribed to it. The story of Socrates is well known: Cicero gives us another example of the same kind, if not a still more striking one. “Stilponem Megaricum philosophum acutum sané hominem & probatum illis temporibus accepimus. Hunc scribunt ipsius familiares & ebriosum & mulierosum fuisse, neque hoc scribunt vituperantes sed potius ad laudem: vitiosam enim naturam ab eo sic edomitam & compressam esse doctrina ut nemo unquam vinolentum illum, nemo in eo libidinis vestigium viderit.” Cicer. de Fato.

mer, but fixing on expedients to accomplish it extremely different *.

He likewise, we shall suppose, observes the dangerous consequences of indulging the passions, and as his own have probably greater strength than those of the former, he will be struck more forcibly with the necessity of restraining these within proper limits. He falls to work therefore with this great end kept constantly in his eye; and having observed the manner in which the passions operate on the characters of mankind, he throws off such resemblances by lively and striking imitations as tend to render virtuous conduct the object of attachment; and vicious practice, of detestation. For this purpose he either shows the pernicious tendency of vice by that stain which it throws upon characters the most dignified and exalted; or he points out the excellence of virtue

* Ου πεισομεθα Ησίοδι (says an able critic) επειδαν τινες τοιαυτα γενους τελευτησωσιν ως αρα οι μεν δαιμονες αγνοι επιχθονιοι τελεθουσιν. εσθλοι, αλεξικακοι φυλακες δυντων ανθρωπων. Πεισομεθα μεν ουν, ΕΡΜΟΓΕΝ, περι ΕΤΡΕΣ,

by the lustre it sheds on persons distinguished by no superiority of intellectual powers: he holds up a faithful mirror to mankind in general*; and by presenting *examples* which all are qualified to contemplate with impartiality, corrects the bad consequences of that self-love which commonly renders us partial to ourselves.

Our poetical instructor attends likewise in this sublime sphere of his profession, to such strokes as make the most immediate and lasting impression on the heart. These he judiciously contrives to press with irresistible energy, and to excite the emotions arising from all by varying the circumstances in a natural and happy manner from distress to prosperity, thus at the same

* Δια των πεπραγμενων τε διασκευαζοντος οφειλοντος πλατυναι το πραγμα μονον. ου μεντοι γε ετε αιτιαις, ετε λογισμοις τοσδεον ετε αλλω τινη επιχειρηματι αλλα μονω τω τροπω. Διασκευαζεται μεν γαρ παντως εκ τι των της περισσεως. Και οτι δ' αν εκεινων η τω τροπω πλατυνεται. Και μετα τε τροπη, και προσωποποιαις οια εικος ην τελεισθαι εφ' εκαστη των πραττομενων, και λεχθηναι δυναμενων παρα των εμφανιζομενων προσωπων εν τη διατυπωσει. Id. p. 180.

time soothing the imagination, instructing the judgment, and mending the heart, Such a process of observation as this probably gave rise to the drama and epœa.

In this process nothing will strike a discerning reader more forcibly than the various operation of the intellectual powers attempting to accomplish one purpose in the different spheres of their exercise. He will observe the understanding, in one case, effectuating its end by the simple medium of proof and investigation; in the other he will trace judgment, in that arrangement of incidents which renders these adapted happily to produce a certain purpose; imagination, in their original invention, and in the glowing imagery which gives them colour and expression; discernment he will perceive in those masterly strokes by which the shades of a character are happily contrasted with its distinguishing excellencies; and exquisite sensibility in that pathos of sentiment and expression which the heart appears to have dictated,
and

and by which the heart of the reader is penetrated.

The drama and the epopœa contemplated in this manner, as arising from the combination of all the intellectual powers, making separately the most strenuous exertion, will appear (the former particularly) to have called these into action with an energy proportioned to the strength and variety of those manners from which an example is to be formed. As these last therefore varied considerably in the more cultivated periods of society from the uniform simplicity of its earliest ages, the dramatic poets discovered without doubt greater versatility of mind, more knowledge of human nature, and deeper insight into the motives by which the heart is actuated, who to the original imperfections superadded a picture of the fashionable vices and foibles of mankind, than he who considered man when his manners were simple and uniform, engaged in a less intricate and perplexing detail.

2. Of the first inventors of the drama we know little with any certainty, nor is this

this a matter of any great consequence, as Æschylus, the great reformer of this branch of poetry, found it in a state of imperfection, which clearly shewed that in the preceding ages civilization had made but very little progress*. Manners at that time were strong, but uniform; and as the wants of men were comparatively few, their virtues or vices lay open to detection. That it required however both address and discernment, in every sense of that word, to strike off an exact imitation of those qualities will be acknowledged without difficulty†. The passions of terror, anger, and

* “ *Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse Camœnæ
Dicitur & plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis
Quæ canerent, agerentque peruncti sæcibus ora.
Post hunc personæ, pallæque repertor honestæ
Æschylus, & modicis instravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.*

Hor. de Art. Poet.

† The great ancient critic appears to have rather refined too much on his subject when he says that
“tragedy exhibits an imitation not of men in general,
“but of their actions; of the life for instance of some
“individual, and of such objects as constitute happiness or misery: that happiness consists in action;
“and though manners denominate the character, yet
“it

and revenge, though these may be detected with greater facility, and perhaps portrayed in all their appearances with less difficulty than such as are concealed behind the masque of hypocrisy, or are contracted by an intercourse with the dissolute and luxurious part of mankind; yet when considered as exerted in particular circumstances, or combined with certain qualities either intellectual or moral, cannot be painted as appropriated to characters without a knowledge of the human heart arguing at the same time discernment and experience.

History however relates not any change so remarkable in the course of a few years as that which appears to have been

“ it is from these last that we decide of man as happy
“ or miserable, in which light he is principally exhibited in tragedy; that therefore a performance of
“ this kind cannot subsist without action, but may
“ without an imitation of manners.” See the 6th ch. of his Poetics.—This is mere metaphysical refinement.—It is certainly not true, that we judge of men as happy or miserable only from their actions: these discover to us in general rather what men ought to be, than what they really are. Their *manners* upon particular occasions, exhibit a much surer test, and it is the business of tragedy to take of both.

wrought

wrought upon the manners of the Athenians, betwixt the time of Æschylus and that of his successor Sophocles, who came only about thirty years behind him. This last poet found his country men eminent for their politeness, learning, elegance, and urbanity, of which they continued for so many ages to set mankind a pattern. The stage, whose reformation kept pace with refinement of manners in every other respect, had now received great improvement, not only from the dress and pronunciation of the actors, as regulated properly to the characters which each was to exhibit, but principally from the change made upon the chorus, which had formerly consisted of a promiscuous croud, whose appearance frightened the spectators instead of producing entertainment; and whose numbers occasioned unavoidable confusion*.

In

* Before the time of Thespis and Æschylus, tragedy was wholly performed by the chorus. The former of these, sensible of the tediousness and insipid uniformity of this design, added to it one person as an actor,

In a state likewise so variously modified as that of Athens, there arose in consequence of the fields successively opened to every passion of the human mind, a va-

actor, but the disproportion still continued to be remarkable. An accident at last brought about a reformation. In the representation of the *Eumenides*, the barbarous dresses of the chorus, which consisted of fifty persons, frightened the women with child into miscarriage, and the children into fits. *Æschylus*, therefore, by contracting the number of persons employed in the chorus, and by adding proportionably to the actors, rendered tragedy so just a representation of manners and action as we see it at present. To this change introduced among the persons he superadded others with regard to machinery, decoration, and decorum. The former he effectuated by erecting a stage for the actors instead of a cart, which had formerly been employed; the latter, by cloathing them in the masque, the buskin, and the long robe; and the last, (by far the most important of all his alterations) by making his murders pass behind the scenes, instead of being performed in sight of the audience. It is on these accounts principally that he is so much celebrated by the ancients, *Vid. Hor. ubi sup. Phil. in Vit. Apollon. lib. vi. c. 6. Vit. Æschy. ap. Stanleium, &c.* In this reformed state therefore *Sophocles* and *Euripides* found the theatre; and when we consider that these men possessed themselves great natural abilities, and found the manners of the Athenian people improved to the utmost, we shall cease to wonder that their composition appears so much more correct and masterly than that of their predecessors.

riety of characters calculated peculiarly to give exercise to the invention of the dramatic poet, and from the dread of his rivals, the diversity of his subjects, and the exquisite taste of his hearers, attentive to the slightest deviation from nature and propriety, that correctness of Composition took place, which indicates a judgment matured by exercise, and maintaining its pre-eminence over the other faculties. Thus in comic representation, it became exceedingly difficult either to develop real vices shaded by a veil of the deepest hypocrisy, or to fix upon those little flaws in characters of distinguished eminence, which render an imitation so happily natural *. In tragic composition indeed the subjects

* The division of comedy among the Greeks into the old, the middle, and the new species is too generally known to be insisted on here at any length. In the first, criminal or ridiculous actions were not only painted in the strongest colours, but the name of the man was publicly mentioned, and an indelible stigma fixed upon his character.

Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,
Quod

subjects continued at every period of society to be of one kind, because the poet
soar-

Quod mæchus foret, aut ficarius, aut alioqui
Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.

Hor. Sat. lib. iv. sat. i.

In the middle comedy, which took place when the Athenian state drew nearer to an oligarchy, this licence was curbed, and the poet allowed to expose the actions, but forbid to name the person. The last species of comedy, without regard to individuals farther than as these may be delineated by the description of particular virtues or vices, consisted wholly of such representations as exhibit a just picture of human life. It must be confessed that such pieces of the celebrated Aristophanes as have reached the present times, are for the most part of the first mentioned species. This poet however must be allowed to have performed a task which does honour to his discernment, whatever discredit it may reflect upon him in other respects, when he exposed the divine Socrates as an object of ridicule to the multitude, and gave mankind a conspicuous evidence that any character, how exalted soever, may be placed in a ridiculous point of view, when the slightest flaw, or even virtuous indignation carried to an extreme, is exposed by a man endowed with this dangerous talent. If there was any circumstance exceptionable in the conduct of Socrates, it appears to have been his being too explicit on the subject of religion, (the most dangerous of all topics) and instilling prejudices against that of his country into the minds of his pupils, before he had substituted such principles in its room, as might counterballance the bad consequences arising from this proceeding.

soaring perpetually here in the region of the sublime and pathetic, finds characters suited to his design among the great and unhappy of all ages. But here likewise it became necessary, that he should attend more closely than formerly to the unity of his fable, to the consistency of his charac-

ceeding. He had likewise somewhat too unwarily absented himself from the theatre when the comedies of that author were represented, which was a neglect not to be overlooked. See Rhymer's View of Tragedy, and Ælian's Various History, b. ii. c. 13. Of this circumstance in the conduct of this great philosopher, Aristophanes, animated by the motive we have suggested, took immediate advantage. He intends to represent his eloquence as dangerous, and calculated to produce the most pernicious effects. "He feigns therefore that a countryman involved in debt sent his son to Socrates's school that he might learn to cheat his creditors. This young fellow is so well instructed by the philosopher, that he goes home, beats his father, and then proves that he had acted very properly." The end proposed here is perfectly obvious. But it is principally our present business to observe, that thorough knowledge of human nature, which was necessary to make Aristophanes succeed in his design, and that share of penetration which is necessary to make an author discern amidst so many excellencies as might overpower an ordinary mind, that little speck by which all may be obscured, and the ends defeated to which these might otherwise be rendered subservient.

ters,

ters; and to the strain of his composition, as preserving a just medium betwixt bombast and meanness, a style equally remote from the stiffness of pedantry, and the rant of declamation.

Upon the whole, dramatic poetry, considered with regard to the faculties of the mind, requires principally the poet to be possessed of that discernment which we have shown to consist of the union of imagination and judgment, and which requires the perpetual, and almost equal operation of both. The former of these powers is required rather to be strong and perspicacious in this branch of composition than florid and luxuriant, because it is the business of the dramatic poet to represent man as a creature whom passion, inclination, and appetite often directs in the conduct of life; and passion never expresseth its feelings in imagery and metaphor*: the latter

* Some modern writers have indeed found a method of reconciling these circumstances, and of making their heroes rave in the flowing style of rhetoric. How far they have followed nature in this conduct their readers must be left to determine. The ancients

latter ought to possess the two qualities of comprehension and precision, that it may at the same time regulate the plan, adjust the incidents to the characters, and direct with such exquisite propriety the time of throwing in those strokes which penetrate the heart as to render the whole piece eminently beautiful, and as nearly as possible perfect in its kind *. A mind capable of execut-

certainly have both judged and acted in a very different manner. The Oedipus of Sophocles, upon the discovery of his guilt, expresseth his despair in the simplest, but at the same time in the most significant words.

Is, 18. τα παντ' αν εξικοι σαφη

Ω φως τελευταιου σε προσβλεψαμι νυν, &c.

He recalls to his memory the places in which he had been educated, and every circumstance contributes to heighten his misery.

Ιω Κτηαιρων, τι μ' εδεχου !

Ω Πολυβε, και Κορινθε, και τα πατρια

Λογω παλαια δωμαθ' οιον αρα με

Καλλος κακων υπολουν εξετρεψατε.

Σοφοκλ. Οιδιπ. Τυρ.

* The poet quoted above, who appears to have been thoroughly acquainted with the human heart, excells particularly in this uncommon faculty of throwing out just at the proper season those exquisite strokes of passion,

executing with mastery a performance of this kind, must possess likewise that exquisite feeling either of pleasure or pain, which renders the author not merely pre-

sion, or rather that perfect imitation of nature, by which every reader must be affected, because the principles here wrought upon are common to all. The following verses contain the most striking examples of this kind I remember ever to have met with. Oedipus, reflecting on the stupendous series of events by which he had been plunged in the blackest despair, exclaims in the agony of his thought

Ω γαμοι, γαμοι, εφυσάθ' ημας, και φυτευσαντες παλι

Ανειτε ταυτον σπερμα και κηπεδειξατε

Πατερας, αδελφους, παιδας αιμα εμφυλιον, &c.

From this scene his mind recoils with horror, and breaking from the thought, he wishes to drop into annihilation.

Ωπως ταχιςα προς θεων εξω με που

Καλυψατ' η φονευσατ', η θαλασσιον

Εκριψατ' ενθα, μηποτ' εισοψεισθ' επι, &c.

Nature herself speaks in all this, and it cannot be perused without emotion. Yet the expression is perfectly simple. The poet had judgment enough to discern that ornament here would have been equally useless and disgusting. Oedipus talks the language of a man overwhelmed with despair. He is hurried by the remembrance of his crimes, which are expressed in very few words, to the desire of instant death. This stroke is introduced just at the proper season, and from this circumstance is derived its pathos and energy.

sent at every scene, but deeply interested in every transaction; and in proportion to the strength or weakness of that sensibility in the author, will be that eager appetite, close attention, or cool indifference with which the reader of discernment will peruse his work.

3. From the preceding observations on the intellectual powers, as variously displayed in dramatic composition, we shall be enabled to point out with greater facility that union of these which gives rise to the more complex species of the epopœa. Considered merely as a branch of Composition, authors have differed very much in their sentiments of dramatic and epic poetry; and a great judge of eminence in both has pronounced a decision in favour of the former*. His sentiments on this subject

* “ Le poeme epique (says an ingenious critic) est ce qu’il y a de plus grand & de plus noble dans la poesie. C’est l’ouvrage le plus accompli de l’esprit humain.— Il (poete heroique) faut de grandes images, & un esprit encore plus grand pour les former. Enfin il faut un jugement si solide, un discernement si exquis, une si parfaite connoissance de la langue, dans laquelle on
écrit;

subject fall not particularly under our present examination. It is necessary only to observe on this subject, that whatever advantages tragedy derives from the perfection of its plan, as relating to one event *, from the shortness of its action, as calculated to arrest attention more forcibly than the diffusive and various transactions recorded by the epic poet †; from the simplicity of its fable, as admitting of no episodes ‡; and finally, from the external machinery of the theatre, the music, elocution, and gesticulation with which its exhibition is accompanied §; yet considered

écrit; une étude si constante, une méditation si profonde, une étendue de capacité si vaste que les siècles entiers à peine peuvent produire un génie capable d'un poème épique." Rap. Reflex. Poet. p. 126.

* ΕΤΙ ΤΟ ΕΛΑΤΤΟΝΙ ΜΗΚΕΙ ΤΟ ΤΕΛΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΜΙΜΗΣΕΩΣ ΕΣΙ.
ΑΡΙΣ. ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΗΤ. ΚΕΦ. ΚΣ.

† ΤΟ ΑΝΘΡΩΤΕΡΟΝ ΗΔΙΟΝ Η ΠΟΛΛΩ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΩ ΧΡΩΝΙ.
ΛΕΓΩ ΔΕ ΟΙΟΥ ΕΙ ΤΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥ ΘΕΙΗ ΤΑ ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΕΝ
ΕΠΕΣΙΝ ΟΣΟΙΣ Η ΙΛΙΑΣ. Id. ibid.

‡ ΕΤΙ ΗΤΤΟΝ ΜΙΑ ΟΠΟΙΑΣΑΝ Η ΤΩΝ ΕΠΟΠΟΙΩΝ· ΣΕΜΕΙΟΝ ΔΕ·
ΕΚ ΓΑΡ ΟΠΟΙΑΣΑΝ ΜΙΜΗΣΕΩΣ, ΠΛΕΙΣΤΕΣ ΤΡΑΓΩΔΙΑΙ ΓΙΝΟΥΝΤΑΙ.
Ibid.

§ ΕΠΕΙΤΑ ΔΙΟΤΙ ΠΑΝΤ' ΕΧΕΙ ΟΣΑΠΕΡ Η ΕΠΟΠΟΙΑ· ΚΑΙ

ed simply as indicating a certain combination of intellectual faculties, and requiring these to be exerted either with comparative strength or variety; epic poetry has in these respects the advantages of this, and indeed of every species of composition whatsoever *. This truth will be rendered more obvious from the following considerations.

I. We have already seen that the most distinguishing ingredient of genius, the power of invention, displays in the drama rather strength and perspicacity than richness and luxuriance, because it admits not in any eminent degree of those glowing colours which are naturally and succefs-

γαρ τῷ ΜΕΤΡῳ ἐξέσι χρῆσθαι, καὶ ὅτι ἔχει μικρὸν μέρος τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ τὴν οὔτιν ἔχει, δεῖς τὰς ἡδονὰς ἐπισανταὶ ἐναργεῶτα. Ibid.

* “ La presence de la divinité & le soin qu’une cause si auguste doit prendre de l’action, oblige le poete a faire que cette action soit grande, importante, & conduit par des princes, & par des rois. Elle oblige aussi de penser & de parler d’une maniere relevée au dessus du commun des hommes, & qui égale en quelque sorte les personnes divines qu’il introduit. C’est a quoi fert le langage poetique & figure & la majesté du vers heroique.” Bossu du Poeme Epique, liv. i. p. 10.

fully

fully employed to render narration animated, or to display in the happiest attitudes the various objects of external nature. Eloquence in the same manner (which derives its origin from a similar combination of the powers of the mind) confines this power principally to the invention of topics of persuasion, and to the office of conveying these with pathos and energy to the heart. Philosophy and history exclude its incidents; but epic poetry affords the most unlimited range to this faculty in whatever point of view its exertions may be surveyed. Thus as the parent of picturesque and beautiful imagery, the whole compass of objects, whether of nature or of art, that fall within the sphere of human investigation lie promiscuously open to its use. As the poet varies his scenery in the course of his narration; as by showing his principal personages in various lights he excites alternately in the minds of his readers admiration, terror, pity, indignation, or distress; he may heighten every successive prospect by significant and appropriated illustrations, and

obtain by these means every purpose to which the *poetic* art in the truest sense of that epithet can be rendered subservient. These advantages the epic poet derives from carrying on an uniform narration of events, instead of assuming always, like the dramatic writer, the style of conversation, which (as we have already seen) contracts the range of imagination, and presents to it a less diversified series of objects. Here too the bard has an advantage over the historian, even in his own sphere of narration, because the latter is confined to the simple detail of facts, on which it is neither necessary nor proper that he should frequently throw the glowing colours of the faculty we are contemplating; whereas in the work of the former these are considered as indispensably requisite.

2. When we again take a view of imagination as inventing an endless variety of new and surprising incidents, the epic poet is here likewise eminently distinguished by the uses he may make of this faculty above all other writers whatever: while
an

an author is confined by the rules of the drama to a short space of time, and to incidents, however surprising, yet tending without the least digressive circumstance to bring on the principal catastrophe; here, on the contrary, every figure of this miniature appears extended to its full proportion. The greatness of the action renders a considerable length of time necessary to complete the design, and in the conduct of the fable, every event within the verge of poetic probability may with propriety be introduced. Unanimity and discord, wisdom and folly, strength and weakness, anger and friendship, war and love, these with all the passions of human nature, wrought into characters, and displayed alternately in a series of events constantly diversified, attract the attention of the reader as powerfully, and render him almost as deeply interested as if every part of the business was really his own, and his happiness or misery was connected with the event.

Add to all this the beauty of those enchanting episodes, which relieve the mind
of

of the reader so agreeably, after having followed out for some time the principal branches of the fable; and the rich and various machinery which fancy is here at liberty to contrive with the utmost licence, and to paint in the most animated colours; and with these advantages in its favour, there is perhaps no other sphere whatever in which imagination may display its power of inventing incidents in an equal degree. This advantage is indeed universally allowed to epic poetry, even by those who consider the dramatic as upon the whole a more perfect species of Composition *, and it is therefore unnecessary to insist on it any longer.

Those sentimental beauties likewise, which in consequence of their novelty, or

* Thus Aristotle, in a passage quoted above, acknowledges that the plan of an epic poem is more complex than that of the drama, and that several tragedies might be made of one. It is somewhat odd that our great critic should adduce this circumstance in proof of the excellence of dramatic above epic poetry, as the complex nature of the fable in the latter naturally calls into exercise the intellectual powers in more various combinations, and when properly executed discovers an higher share of merit.

peculiar delicacy are supposed to derive their origin from the power of invention, may here be introduced with the greatest propriety. Accordingly in the standards of the epopœa the most delicate expressions of parental tenderness*, of filial gratitude†, of inviolable friendship‡, and of conjugal felicity§, are every where to be met with. Those moral reflections on human life, which tend to soften and mend the human heart, are cloathed in such striking colours as to make a lasting impression on the memory||; and the events perpetually varying, pour upon a contemplative mind a series of such instructive observations, as

* ΙΛΙΑΔ. ζ. l. 466. ΟΔΥΣ. π. pass.

† ΟΔΥΣ. ubi sup. Æneid. lib. ii. l. 707.

‡ ΙΛΙΑΔ. ζ. l. 120, &c. θ. l. 93. κ. 242, &c. Æneid, lib. v. l. 294.

§ ΙΛΙΑΔ. ubi sup. ΟΔΥΣ. ψ. pass. Æneid. 2. 711. 738, &c.

|| How beautiful in this kind is the following image in Glaucus address to Diomed,

Οἷη περ Φυλλῶν γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνέμος χαμαδὶς χεεῖ, ἀλλὰ δὲ θ' ὕλη

Τηλεθώσα φυεῖ. ἑαρος δ' ἐπιγιγνεται ὥρη.

Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἢ μὲν φυεῖ, ἢ δ' ἀπολήγει. ΙΛΙΑΔ. ζ.

render

render this work when properly conducted not less useful than entertaining.

3. Of imagination, as employed in the invention of *human* characters, so much hath been said that it would be superfluous to insist on this branch of the subject at any length. It must however be acknowledged that the mythology of the ancients gave advantages to the epic bard in drawing the characters of his *celestial* personages, of which he is in a great measure deprived by that more perfect system of revealed religion, whose laws permit not imagination to blend opposite qualities together in such a manner as to form picturesque and original representations. Homer appears to have availed himself of all the benefits derived from the religion of his country: and by an happy intermixture of the qualities of the divine with the frailties of the human nature, has rendered his deities by far the most beautiful and entertaining personages of his fable *. By
these

* Our incomparable Milton has chosen a plan of all others best calculated to supply the defect arising necessarily

these means he possesseth the peculiar advantage of painting many original characters without violating the rules of *poetic* probability. This benefit arose from the practice of the ancient poets, who (as no system of revelation took place) were left at liberty to invent such a plan as imagination presented at random; and succeeding bards, provided they did not overthrow the system of their predecessors, might employ their divinities in such actions as displayed in their full extent that union of diversified qualities which fancy had assigned them. In order to render this representation complete, as an imitation of characters, the gentler and more

farily here from the nature of our religion. His devils however, give by no means that enchanting variety to the *Paradise Lost*, which the heathen deities give to the works of Homer and Virgil. These last blend promiscuously the virtues, the weaknesses, and even the vices of human nature in the character of their divinities; whereas Milton, in painting his celestial combatants, was confined to the first; in describing their adversaries, to the last mentioned qualities, but was nowhere at liberty to unite both, in such a manner as forms that imitation which the *human* mind delights to contemplate.

amiable

amiable female qualities are blended even with the foibles and weaknesses of that sex among the goddesses, who act a principal part in the work. Thus, as the scene varies to heaven, earth, or hell, whose powers are all interested in the catastrophe, attention is kept always upon the stretch by contemplating objects perpetually diversified, and the subject admits by these means an extent and compass of invention superior in every respect to that which is displayed in any other branch of the art.

2. While the imagination thus has scope in the epopœa to display all its exuberance and versatility, a sphere equally extensive is opened to the understanding which is required to operate as universally, and with an energy proportioned to the former.

This truth will be rendered sufficiently obvious, if we observe, that the preservation of the unities in the epic fable, the adjustment of its parts to each other in such a manner as to form upon the whole a proportioned as well as diversified series of objects ; its incidents judiciously adapted to excite, but never to fatigue attention ;

tion; and its episodes considered as connected with the ultimate aim of the work, and interwoven in such a manner as to set off the principal figures to the greatest advantage; these are ends essential to the very existence of this high species of composition, and it must be immediately obvious that each is acquired by some exertion of the understanding.

Judgment therefore is here required to be at the same time sedulous and unembarrassed; clear and comprehensive: sedulous, because the closest attention is necessary to give every member of the work its due proportion and consistence; unembarrassed, that amidst the diversity of materials, the mind may select with ease such upon occasion as are fitted justly to its purpose; clear, that every character may be uniformly discriminated, and that every illustration may correspond to its object; and comprehensive, that it may be equal to purposes so widely different, and effectuate each with the same mastery and correctness. An artist who follows out a simple plan with adequate ability naturally claims

claims our esteem and approbation; but we bestow a much larger share of both on him who brings grace and proportion out of an exhaustless variety of materials; who shapes into form, a figure consisting of the most complicated ingredients, and with a sagacity attentive to the minutest circumstance, renders every movement subservient to the ultimate purpose of his work.

As judgment therefore may display its extent and comprehension in the external machinery and mechanism of the epopœa, so it may discover true philosophical precision in the discussion of those questions, whether moral or political, that take their rise from the characters, events, and transactions of the work. Arguments will here be stated and enforced, objections will be proposed and refuted, expedients suited to the manners of the persons, and calculated to shew the points in which these last are discriminated will be fixed upon as the detail becomes complex and interesting; and doctrines of the most extensive utility, with regard to the conduct of life, may be
either

either formally unfolded, be ornamented with imagery, or be inculcated as the morals of some beautiful allegories; as time and circumstances require these to be treated. It was undoubtedly in consequence of his having taken this enlarged view of epic poetry, as affording exercise to the understanding, that the eloquent and judicious Roman poet pronounceth Homer to have excelled the most distinguished philosophers, even in their own sphere.

Trojani belli scriptorem — relegi —

Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile,
quid non,

Plenius & melius Chrysispo, et Crantore docet.

Horace!

A noble and appropriated eulogium, not less honourable to the *judgment* of the *critic* who could apply, than to the genius of *the poet* who could deserve it.

3. Discernment of the most exquisite kind, as resulting from the union of the superior faculties the epic poet may evince likewise in the highest degree, by varying the expression of *one* quality according to

the combination in which it is placed*; by observing the instant at which the mind is susceptible of almost any impression; and beyond all other indications, by throwing out those little strokes of nature, imperceptible to a superficial eye, which command the immediate acknowledgment of a feeling heart, not by language but by tears.

III. The two higher species of fable (the dramatic and epic) we have now considered particularly, as indicating a certain union of the intellectual powers, and we have endeavoured to point out, not only the general offices appropriated to these in the departments above mentioned, but the peculiar qualities by which each may be distinguished. Before we conclude our observations on this branch of the subject, it may be proper to examine with the same view to the faculties of the mind, some kinds of fable, inferior indeed to the former with regard to the *variety of talents*

* See sect. iii.

required for their production, but demanding an high degree of such as are indispensably necessary for this purpose, and giving occasion to display no inconsiderable proportion of all.

Among the writers who excel in this class, the first rank will undoubtedly be assigned to those who have attempted to follow out the wanderings of the human heart, and to delineate the first impressions made upon a susceptible mind by interesting objects, as well as the manner in which it feels when insensibly familiarized to their appearance. An author who is capable of exhibiting with propriety a character of this kind, who adapts circumstances to the affections which he propoeth to excite, and paints these so happily when excited, as to imitate nature in her most delicate signatures, possesseth an high share of philosophical excellence, and shows that exquisite sensibility as existing in his own mind, which he pourtrays so justly in that of another. Here indeed the imagination displays no sublimity, or exuberance, as the characters are not of that

exalted cast which require these to be exerted: but that instantaneous perception of certain attitudes, which discernment ultimately derives from imagination, that correspondence of which every man is sensible betwixt the action and the feeling giving rise to it in one heart, and excited by it in another; these circumstances denominate taste in the most eminent degree, and that deep insight into human nature, which experience may indeed improve, but cannot possibly confer.

In this kind of fable Mariveaux, Crebillon, and we may add, our late ingenious countryman Sterne, in his *Sentimental Journey*, excel all other writers whatever, and their excellence (displayed in one sphere only) is altogether peculiar and inimitable. The Marianne of the first mentioned author is a character truly exquisite in its kind, in which however, unless the reader feels the sentiments themselves, it is impossible to adduce examples. A heart fluttering alternately with love and vanity, touched with the lightest trifles, bursting with passion, melting with tenderness, actuated

actuated by impressions purely feminine, and having the noblest qualities shaded by a few foibles which render her still more the object of affection; this is the portrait here presented to us, and it is drawn in such a manner as that the hand of a master appears in the execution. In that beautiful piece of Crebillon, where the waverings of a young heart unacquainted with the nature of its own sensations are touched with the nicest discernment, the reader of taste, for to him only these works are addressed, will find the conduct of a man thrown into life, with susceptible passions, and a small share of experience, as happily exposed as the female character of the former. The merit of the English writer, in the work we have referred to, lies in his happy talent of exciting the tenderest and most affecting sensations from the most trifling occurrences. With no uncommon depth or compass of understanding, this author is distinguished by a copious imagination, and an eminent proportion of the qualities of the heart. His discernment, therefore, which as a

philosopher is neither extensive nor accurate, yet as a moral painter is exquisite, and, when employed in its proper sphere, never fails to hit upon strokes of nature the most expressive, and upon motives of powerful and irresistible energy.

A more moderate share of all the qualities above-mentioned is displayed upon some occasions in the invention of fables, by which a variety of familiar characters are exhibited either in new and well adapted circumstances, or with ordinary qualities, in such combination as render the whole in some degree original. The former of these ends is obtained when the mind is agreeably led through a series of incidents, happily calculated to throw light upon the principal character, and tending to show it in every separate point of view;—the latter, when its oddity is of such a kind as to render it uncommon without being false or unnatural *. Ex-
amples

* Was I upon this occasion to characterise our two most celebrated modern novelists, I would venture to ascribe the first kind of merit to Richardson, and the
last

amples of both kinds the reader of curiosity will meet with in the *Gil Blas* of Le Sage, the *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* of

last to Fielding. The *Clarissa* of the former is in no respect original. She appears adorned with an assemblage of virtues, and of intellectual endowments, which it is to be hoped we shall frequently meet with; only in order to have the force of an *example*; these are raised considerably beyond the common level. Considering this then as the author's intention, nothing can be more admirably concerted than the incidents by which every distinct excellence is called successively into action. Firmness, vigilance, circumspection, united with all the gentler and more amiable female qualities, appear in the *trial*; while resignation, fortitude, forgiveness of injuries, and all the virtues of the christian, are nobly exemplified in the *catastrophe*.—The *Adams* of Fielding on the contrary, strikes us wholly in the light of an original, arising not like that of *Falstaff* or *Don Quixote*, from extraordinary qualities exerted in a manner wholly new and surprising; but from a combination of such as are indeed more common, but marked with *one defect* that throws an air of ridicule and oddity on the whole. This defect is a total want of the knowledge of mankind. The incidents of the piece are fewer, and the plan less complicated than that either of *Clarissa*, or even of the subsequent productions of Fielding:—but the character is marked with *little strokes* which render it *truly comic*, and there is scarce a single instance in the whole work, in which the originality either ceaseth to appear when it ought to be conspicuous, or is carried beyond nature.

Fielding, the Roderic Random of Smollett, and a few other English novels which appear to stand in the same rank of excellence. If we meet not in these with those exquisite strokes of nature and passion which characterise the former, the defect is, however, abundantly compensated by characters well supported, and happily discriminated; by incidents such as we see constantly falling out, but connected so as to form a rational entertainment, in which probability is seldom violated; by a faithful picture of human life in all its diversified appearances; and by a knowledge of mankind, which to some readers may in a great measure supply the loss of a limited acquaintance, and a defective education.

It will immediately be perceived that a large proportion of the intellectual powers is required to produce a masterly performance in this branch of Composition. Perhaps, however, upon the whole, judgment is displayed in it more conspicuously than imagination. The invention of incidents (in which the last of these is principally

cipally employed here) is by no means characteristical, as we have already seen, of the most eminent degree of this faculty. The judgment which rangeth these so justly as to employ the different persons in such spheres of action as are best calculated to show their *peculiar qualities* to advantage, must be uncommonly comprehensive and accurate. The Adams of Fielding would have appeared to no advantage had he been wholly conversant with persons in very low life, or with such as were entirely on a level with himself. But the lady, the waiting maid, the hosts, the 'squires, the parsons, and the justices, with whom he is alternately and most judiciously contrasted, contribute separately to finish the character, until the figure is set before us completely proportioned.

Penetration likewise, as employed to develope the secret motives from which the actions of men derive their origin, the ingenious novellist will display to great advantage in the artful arrangement of his incidents; in the strokes that mark his characters; in the judicious selection of
such

such topics as make the most lasting impression on the heart; and in contrasting the persons of his fable in such a manner as may most happily expose vice, detect hypocrisy, and render presumption, affectation, or arrogance, the objects of ridicule.

We shall conclude this branch of the subject by observing, that Rousseau and Richardson have carried this species of fable to its utmost perfection. These writers have the peculiar merit of having introduced into a love-tale, calculated one should think principally to give the mind a little transient entertainment, all the graces of captivating eloquence, and the noble maxims of a sublime philosophy. No branch of the moral character hath been left unexplored by these excellent authors, in whose writings (particularly in those of the last) the entertainment derived from narration is so justly blended with the improvement acquired from convincing and perspicuous deduction, that we are at a loss to determine which of these ends is most effectually promoted.

There

There never perhaps, was a female character more highly finished than the Eloisa of Rousseau, which is in all respects more particular and appropriated than either the Clarissa or Grandison of Richardson. It is, indeed, a perfect picture of nature, finished with the most exquisite taste, and in which not even the slightest and most delicate shading is deficient. We alternately admire, in this enchanting portrait, an happy mixture of tenderness and sensibility, love and resolution, enthusiasm and reason, virtue and weakness, with a capacity of receiving and of communicating the most voluptuous sensations, which show us all together that height of excellence of which this species of Composition is naturally susceptible.

If, however, the English writer is inferior to his rival in this invention of character, an impartial reader will allow him perhaps the advantage in the number and variety of his incidents, the precision and compass of his philosophy, the strength and pathos of his eloquence. In this last quality perhaps no writer ever excelled him

him of whom we are treating. The eloquence of Rousseau is sometimes sublime and elevating*; often deeply pathetic†; on many occasions rich, luxurious, and enchanting‡. But the power of *harrowing up* the soul with woe and horror; of cleaving the heart with pity and anguish; of dissolving the mind in that sublime melancholy which exalted genius can alone either feel or communicate;—these seem to be the provinces of Richardson, in which he is wholly original and inimitable.

We have been particularly attentive to display that union of intellectual powers which is necessary to perfection in the species of fable here considered, as our remarks on this subject may be of some use

* See particularly his noble address to the Atlantic Ocean, upon which he was going to launch with Anson.

† His letter from the rocks of Meillerai, is wholly in this strain.

‡ The letter supposed to have been written in Eloisa's closet before the moment of enjoyment, and that succeeding the full accomplishment of his desires, are full of this luxurious description.

to authors of this denomination; and I do not remember to have seen any regular attempt made to lay open the principles upon which a branch of Composition so universally popular, and susceptible of such high improvement, ought to be conducted.

IV. Having now considered the various combinations of the mental powers, with regard to the other species of Composition, it is only further necessary that we should observe the degree of influence which these exert in the sphere of criticism.

This noble art when viewed as extending universally to all branches of learning, and to every species of Composition, will be found to give exercise in so many ways to the faculties of the mind, that a detail of their various combinations in every art and science to which the rules of criticism are applied, would carry us into unnecessary length, without effectuating any purpose that may not be obtained by taking a more general view of the subject. Considering therefore criticism as exercising universal dominion over the two great empires

pires of art and science, we shall endeavour to show what compass of intellectual powers is required to constitute the general character of mastery in this art; and in what degrees the great objects above-mentioned require these powers to be exerted.

1. It requires but superficial acquaintance with this subject to make us sensible that a *great and sublime imagination* is by no means necessary to form a masterly critic. A man possessed of this talent in a very high degree, will not only be apt, without constant circumspection, to permit its dictates too frequently to influence decisions with which it is no way connected, but (as a late ingenious critic observes very justly of Longinus) he will be always aspiring rather to *imitate* the beauties of his original, than to point these out with that appropriated character which taste united with judgment will seldom err in conferring. The two last qualities ought therefore to be considered as peculiarly and essentially requisite to critical excellence. The first in its *greatest extent* does by no means

means absolutely disqualify a man for occupying this sphere:—in a *moderate* proportion, as the parent of *taste*, it is wholly indispensable.

That power which we denominate Taste in criticism (as far as the arts are concerned) is discernment corrected by judgment *in the use*, as it is guided by imagination in the *original perception* of its objects. It will be observed that we make use here of the term *perception* rather than that of *selection* or *choice*, which ariseth, as we shall see afterwards, from another cause.

1. That imagination only is employed in the original perception of the objects of criticism, will be obvious, if we reflect by what power of the mind it is that a man becomes immediately sensible of certain exquisite beauties, or perhaps material defects in the fine arts, wholly imperceptible to a common observer. That it cannot be judgment which directs us in this matter is unquestionably evident from this single circumstance, that even where a very superior degree of this faculty takes place, we often

often find the persons possessed of it not only unable to discover objects of this kind themselves; but to relish these in any measure when pointed out to them by others. A kind of *artificial taste* (if I may use that expression) is indeed formed among such men by application and experience; but it generally goes no further than to render them judges of external symmetry and proportion. The rough outlines of a figure, or the conformity which a work bears to certain general laws established either by reason, or derived from habit, will attract the attention of such critics very strongly, and as the understanding when thoroughly acquainted with a subject, and uninfluenced by any other power, seldom errs in its decisions, a judgment will be formed of these objects with great accuracy and precision. But of the effect arising from a certain happy expression in the execution; of a figure as rendered not merely proportioned, but intensely animated by an assemblage of well adapted circumstances; of one exquisite stroke, contrary perhaps to common rules, and to be
con-

contemplated wholly as an object of admiration, which presents a form immediately to the eye with peculiar and inimitable beauty; of these a faculty accustomed wholly to close investigation takes no cognizance itself, and is apt to regard as sport and trifling what it is unable to comprehend.—In short, judges (as they may affect to be styled) of Composition who are directed wholly by the understanding, will form an estimate in many instances equally inadequate as that of the mathematician I have somewhere read of, who perused the *Æneid* with maps of the countries mentioned in that work, and admired the author only as an excellent geographer.

As the perception therefore of the objects of Criticism in the arts depends not upon judgment, it must necessarily arise from some other power of the mind; and this it is obvious can only be that power which being the parent of these in the artist, can alone take cognisance of them in the person who surveys his performance.—“Imagination (as an elegant critic
“observeth) dwells upon an agreeable ob-

“ject with delight, arrays it in the most
 “beautiful colours, and becomes ena-
 “moured of its own creation. Taste
 “catching the contagion from fancy, con-
 “templates the favourite object with equal
 “transport, by which means it acquires
 “and improves its sensibility: it be-
 “comes more susceptible of pleasure, and
 “more exquisitely acute in its sensa-
 “tions *.”

In order however to accomplish these purposes, we are not to judge (as was formerly observed) that an *eminent* share of imagination is indispensably requisite. In fact, however strange the remark may appear, it is yet certain that Taste (when the mind is employed not in judging, but in execution,) is often found to be most defective in those authors who are allowed to possess a superior share of that faculty from which it is more immediately derived. Shakespeare and Young, among our own writers, and Dante and Ariosto among those of a foreign nation, afford

* See Duff's Essay on Original Genius, sect. iv. p. 67.

such pregnant examples of the truth of this observation, as renders any further illustration of it unnecessary. It is not our intention to insinuate that these authors were really destitute of Taste, as it enables a man to relish the most exquisite beauties, and to judge with the utmost precision and accuracy of the productions of others. It will appear perhaps upon examination, that men of this superior order are often deficient in *execution* themselves, when they are yet capable of deciding, with a discernment rarely to be met with, of the conformity betwixt a general standard and particular modes of imitation.

We have already seen the invariable connection that takes place betwixt imagination and feeling, or sensibility. In proportion to the degree in which the one takes place, will be always the poignancy and edge of the other. In estimating the general merit, or even in being impressed by particular beauties or defects in the work of another, it is obvious that this sensibility must be less exquisite, and consequently the mind more cool and dispassionate

sionate, than when its powers are intensely animated by the fervor with which this faculty in its greatest vigour contemplates the object of its more immediate research. In the first case, the mind possessing the power upon which the perception of these objects depends, can examine them at leisure, and can judge of them either by the general laws of Composition, by their tendency to promote a particular purpose, or by that train of intermediate ideas with which these ought to stand in connection. But the case is altogether different in this last situation. A strong imagination, wholly engrossed by the greatness of its conceptions, becomes inattentive to such circumstances as appear to be inferior, and dwelling with transport upon some favourite idea, is rendered incapable of producing uniformity and proportion on the whole. Taste in this case becomes vitiated by the exuberance of that power to which it owes its origin, and thus the same faculty that invents the theory, appears unequal to the task of carrying its principles into execution.

From

From these observations it is, we presume, sufficiently obvious that a moderate portion of imagination is only requisite for accomplishing the purposes to which Criticism (in the arts) is rendered subservient. Discernment in this case, if it does not enter so deeply upon some occasions into the nature of a subject as in the other, is yet truer, more consistent, and less apt to be misled in its estimations by whim and singularity.

In order however, to accomplish the purposes above-mentioned, it is necessary that critical penetration should be invariably corrected by judgment *in the use* of those objects whose perception depends upon the power of invention *. The man of mere fancy, whatever share of it he may possess, will always err, not indeed in the discovery of objects, but in the se-

* “ Nos quid in quaque re sequendum cavendumque sit, docebimus (says an admired ancient) ut ad ea *judicium* dirigatur. Præcipuum igitur, ne quod effici non potest aggrediamur: ut contraria vitemus, & communia: ne quid in eloquendo corruptum obscurumque sit, referatur oportet ad sensus qui non docentur.” Quintil. de Instit. Orat. lib. vi. cap. 6.

lection of such as are most proper upon particular occasions, in that just arrangement of inferior parts which renders a whole proportioned and consistent, and in that judicious application of examples by whose use a theory ought to be illustrated*.

The

* In the noble work of Longinus, whose vivid imagination and exquisite taste were not always regulated by the dictates of an unbiassed understanding, we meet in some instances, with such trivial criticism as the spirit in which other parts of that performance is conducted, would by no means lead us to expect. Thus he at one time censures Herodotus, and at another Theopompus, for little inaccuracies which a writer of such superior discernment ought perhaps to have overlooked. The former of these in describing a tempest says, Της περι το ναυαγιον βρασσομενους εξεδεχετο πελος ΑΧΑΠΙ. Those who suffered ship-wreck had an unhappy exit. This word ΑΧΑΠΙ (unhappy) the critic censures as not equal to the greatness of the calamity. He is no doubt in the right. But where a description is otherwise sublime (as Longinus acknowledgeth this to be) and wrought up with even divine magnificence, is it worth while for a man capable himself of imitating the sublimity whose original he develops with such unquestioned discernment, to cull out a circumstance so comparatively insignificant? This is rather in the spirit of Anaxarchus, or Bentley, than in that of an author whose work otherwise evinceth that

He

The attainment of this last end requires more immediately a constant and strenuous exertion

He is himself the great sublime he draws. Pope.

We may here observe transiently, that an epithet may sometimes have impropriety when referred to some particular circumstance in a complicated description, whose beauty is yet such upon the whole, that no reader of taste would choose its position to be altered, or would substitute another in its room. In that sublime description of the tempest, in which Æneas had suffered so greatly, the bard represents Neptune as roused at last by the war of elements, and arising to calm the agitated ocean.

Interea magno misceri murmure pontum

Emissamque hyemen sensit Neptunus, &c.

Every reader of the least sensibility must be struck with the majesty of his deportment.

— *graviter commotus*, & alto

Prospiciens, summa placidum caput extulit unda. Æn. i.

A critic, however, might no doubt, find some incongruity betwixt the idea suggested by “*placidum caput*” which represents his countenance as *serene*, and that implied in the words “*graviter commotus*” which show him to have been agitated by anger.—But does not a criticism of this kind rather give pain than pleasure to an ingenuous mind, by showing that all human excellence is comparative and imperfect?—Would any reader of taste displace here the word “*placidum*” so characteristic of that *serene majesty* in the midst of *universal uproar* which ought to distinguish the monarch of the ocean, on account of this little impropriety? Unquestionably not.—But let us return to Longinus.—

exertion of the understanding. Some general idea may be obtained by any man
of

Our ingenious critic after having censured Herodotus, falls next upon Theopompus. He transcribes at length a passage from that historian, where he mentions the presents that were offered to the king of Persia upon his conquest of Egypt. He is offended with this enumeration, because instead of rising from lesser objects to greater, Theopompus closeth his account with describing what he calls "the furniture of a kitchen."—Caussin, a writer of some ingenuity, has condemned Longinus severely for this censure, and Bayle, in his lively manner, approves of his animadversions.—"Longinus (says Caussin) is flat here and severe to no purpose. It was the business of a faithful historian, to take notice of the respect that was paid to the king of Persia by the meaner class of his subjects; and if Longinus has taken such an aversion to bacon, why (says our critic) does he not fall out with his desied Homer, who describes with so much simplicity the cookery of his princes." Causs. de Eloq. sacr. & human. lib. i. c. 20. This last hint Bayle looks upon as a home push, and gives up Longinus as inexcusable. See his Dict. Critique, &c. art. THEOPOMPUS. But with submission to both these gentlemen, there is more plausibility than truth in this reasoning. Our excellent critic's principal quarrel with the historian here, is not so much with his account of the last mentioned circumstances, as with its being misplaced. Εκ των υψηλοτερων επι τα ταπεινοτερα αποδιδρασκει δεον ποιησασθαι την αυξησιον
εμπαλιν,

of tolerable imagination, of beauty or deformity, incongruity or proportion in one object; and examples may be applied with

εμπαλιν, &c. Περὶ Ὑψ. τμημ. μγ. "He sinks (says he) from great to ignoble objects, against the known rule of conducting a climax." Longinus is certainly right in this judgment. But the case of Homer is no way parallel. When his princes are employed in cookery no such *climax* is attempted. Magnificent objects are not, as in the detail of Theopompus, blended heterogeneously with such as are comparatively mean and fordid:—all is uniformly simple and natural. In order to render Homer as culpable as Theopompus is here, Caussin ought to produce some passage from the Iliad or Odyssey, in which the poet sums up some detail of magnificent presents, with an account of fresh and salted provisions. The fault therefore here is not that the critic is too severe, but that his example is unappropriated. Longinus had censured Herodotus in two passages quoted from that author, for spoiling a description otherwise sublime, not by introducing an improper circumstance, but by making use of an ill-adapted expression. He quotes the above mentioned passage from Theopompus, as containing an error of the same kind. But the fault attributed to the former is not conspicuous here. The words in this last example are suited with sufficient propriety to the subject. In the first, one unlucky epithet destroys the effect of a noble description. One therefore is a little inadvertency in the shading of the piece; the other indicates a defect of judgment, or at least of taste, in the painter.

sufficient

sufficient perspicuity to render this idea clear and even forcible. A house for instance, a tree, or a river, may be described with much propriety by a poet; and the critic may with propriety likewise select this description to exemplify some observation on descriptive beauty in the art. But in all this process though both are exempted from censure, neither do we consider the former as displaying any eminent share of imagination, nor the latter, in his application of it to a certain purpose, uncommon sagacity and reach of understanding. It is when the subject becomes complicated in one case by the happy intermixture of various objects reflecting mutual light upon each other (the morning ray for instance trembling on the bough, glimmering through the casement, or illuminating the plumage of the little tribes that sport on the undulating wave); in the other, when some peculiarly happy imitation arising from this assemblage is instantly perceived, and *the cause* assigned from which its significance and impression ultimately arise;—it is in these cases that
the

the genius of the painter appears in the most animated light, and the sagacity of the critic in its utmost perfection. When the mind, on the contrary, forms only general theories, or even catcheth the idea of *possible* excellence, without being thus *particular* in the application of examples, we either consider the judgment of the critic as superficial, or are embarrassed by an uninteresting and unappropriated detail.

The truth of these remarks will be rendered still more conspicuous, when we apply what hath been here advanced to the faculties of the mind.—Man, considered as a being whose actions derive their origin from the combined influence of various principles, would surely be described in a very inadequate manner by that moralist who should trace (with whatever accuracy) only one intellectual power, or one passion through its effects on human life; when we know that the simplest character exhibits an assemblage greatly diversified of both. As the philosopher therefore discovers the strength and compass of his own understanding by that precision with
which

which he explores the influence of this power on passions that obstruct its operation, so the critic in the same manner discovers true sagacity in his profession who observes in what the excellence of this disquisition consists, and adapts an example thus complicated to the illustration of his own hypothesis. The passions in this last instance, like the external objects of which our senses take cognisance mentioned in the former, may be contemplated separately without much difficulty, and the effect of each on human character may be pointed out with unexceptionable accuracy, by a man whose philosophical merit is inconsiderable. But in both cases, we can have no surer proof that the judgment of a critic possesseth depth and solidity, than when we find his observations confirmed by examples in which the beauty is not general, or referred to one object; but ariseth from a diversified, though natural combination. Discernment is here seen to be guided by imagination in the perception of objects whose use is prescribed by the understanding.

II. Criticism, when considered more particularly with regard to scientific research, will render still more conspicuous our observations on those important offices which are exercised in this province by the reasoning faculty. In philosophy we have already seen, that as judgment directs the author in the choice of his subject, in the method of conducting it, and in the just proportion of its parts to each other*, so it is judgment likewise by which the critic is enabled to form an adequate estimate of the execution. That exquisite discernment, so necessary in *the arts* where imagination perceives such objects as reason enables us to put to their proper use, is not essentially requisite to characterise the philosophical critic, because the theory of which he is to judge, having been formed originally by the understanding, its inventor; fancy can have no extensive influence in con-

* Το γὰρ ψευδὸς ἐν Συνθεσὶ αἰε' ἐνδεχεται δὲ καὶ διαίρεσιν φαναι πάντα. Το δὲ ἔΝ ποιοῦν τὸτο Ὁ ΝΟΥΣ ἐκαστου. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. περὶ Ψυχ. βιβ. Γ. κεφ. Ε.

ducting its examination. That we may have a clear view of this subject, it will be proper to enquire what the critic in the present case is principally required to have in view.

The general plan of a philosophical work is then only complete (as we have already shewn) when it is distinct, connected, and comprehensive of the subject *. A writer who obtains these points is properly nominated judicious, because it is unquestionably by an effort of the understanding that materials are arranged in such a manner as to form a whole that is proportioned and consistent. Even the *invention* of these in this science we have shewn to arise from the same faculty; and we have distinguished by particular criteria this kind of invention from that which is either derived from another power of the mind, or from the union of both. An excellence or defect in

* ΔΙΑΘΕΣΙΣ (says the great philosopher quoted above) λεγεται του εχοντος μερη ταξις, η κατα τοπον, η κατα δυναμιν, η κατα ειδος. Τρισιν γαρ δει τινα ειναι ωσπερ και το ονομα δηλοι η Διαθεσις. ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣ. βιβ. Δ. κεφ. ιθ.

this discovery or disposition falling under the cognifance of an intelligent judge, will give him occafion to fhew that good fenfe (as it is called), that power of thinking with juftnefs and precision, which fo univerfally denominates the prevalence of reafon. It is true indeed that a man of *discernment*, in the proper fenfe of that word, may difplay this quality to great advantage in fuch a difquifition; but it is equally certain that a decifion perfectly accurate, and founded on the jufteft principles, may be pronounced on the invention and difpofition of materials in a philofophical enquiry by a perfon whole powers of imagination are inadequate to thofe of his underftanding.

When again we come to weigh the comparative ftrengh of arguments, as carrying conviction to the mind, we muft be immediately fenfible that it is the *reafon* of mankind only to which the philofopher here appeals, and it is *reafon* only by whole aid the truth or fallacy of thefe arguments can be detected by the critic, who judgeth of his work. Penetration, as obferving this fallacy immediately, though concealed
by

by the most plausible representation, will render him qualified to enter with ease, as well as depth and compass into his subject; but reason alone, without this quick and almost intuitive perception, by its steady attention and gradual procedure, obtains its end at last as surely, though not perhaps so quickly as the former; and by investigating closely every circumstance of its detail, lays before the mind a view of the whole research conceived with comprehension, and expressed with perspicacity.

Here I am aware that a very natural and important question will arise. Since (it will be said) the understanding alone is adequate to so many purposes in this dignified sphere of composition, what is meant by that *philosophical discernment*, which a masterly critic is said to discover in this noble and instructive science, and how are *its* objects to be distinguished from such as are contemplated solely by the faculty of reason? This question is very proper, and in answer to it we must in general observe, that the degree of discernment (such

as hath already been delineated) which is displayed in philosophical criticism depends principally upon the conduct of the work which it is proposed to investigate. The critical art is in this respect dissimilar to others, that though referred ultimately indeed to nature and truth as its standards, yet more immediately it relates to some work in which these are imitated or developed. In an examination therefore thus conducted, it is obvious that the combination of powers appearing to predominate in the mind of the critic must be of the same kind, though not perhaps equal in degree with that which characteriseth the writer whose work is examined. Thus we shall naturally be induced to judge of the former as possessing certain intellectual qualities from the choice which he makes of his subject, and with a prepossession thus far justly established, we shall consider the execution of his performance. Reason, we have already seen, takes cognisance of the propriety and connection of arguments as standing together in a natural arrangement: discernment

(consisting of the union of this faculty with that of invention) directs in this sphere in what manner these may be most powerfully illustrated, and discovers the best means of enforcing each with energy and strength. This last quality therefore will always appear to the greatest advantage in philosophy, when the work criticised contains excellencies arising from the superior powers sometimes making a distinct and sometimes an united exertion, in which cases the critic may show his penetration in a very striking point of view, by tracing each kind to its original source; and by following out the operation of either or both faculties so accurately as to discover his own knowledge of the human mind, and to enlarge that of his reader.

Here it is easy to observe that the understanding, however enlarged and comprehensive, can be adequate only to a few of those purposes which it is necessary to accomplish, because beauties derived from *an union* of intellectual powers in the author which subsists not in the mind of him who attempts to judge of his work, must either
be

be deemed equal to one important branch of his subject, when his discernment of others is faulty and deficient. Still however we are to remember, that as the sphere assigned to imagination is more limited in this than in any other species of Composition, a man possessing strength and solidity of judgment may employ the critical art in philosophy, with emolument to his readers, when the examination of other subjects requiring a more complicated intermixture of mental qualities might be justly chargeable with absurdity and inconsistency.

History, when regarded as a mirror in which the mind is faithfully reflected, and the real characters of men tried by the surest of all tests, that of their conduct in diversified occurrences gives scope to the discernment of a genuine critic, as much at least as any literary department whatever. There are indeed a kind of drudges who pretend to appropriate this province to themselves, whose labours discover critical acumen in the same manner as a waggon-horse jingling his bells shows the ardour

and impetuosity of the hunter; and who, though useful in a certain sphere, are as much disqualified for others, as the former loosed from his machine would be to take the hedge or gate at a leap in pursuit of the greyhound. Among these we may include the whole tribe of verbal and chronological critics, the latter of whom in particular display learning and application, and even the former, upon some occasions, ingenuity in their conjectures; but neither of these can apply the received opinions of what constitutes excellence or defect in the historical profession so justly to the work they are examining as to evince their own knowledge of the human heart, and thus render history subservient to its most important purpose, that of instructing mankind by example.

We would not be understood here to detract from the real merit of authors, whose industry has been of use to such readers as desire to have every transaction recorded in history as clearly elucidated as possible. But without incurring this censure, we may surely observe that he who traceth
actions

actions with accuracy up to their original causes, however remote and apparently incompatible with their effects; who detects for instance jealousy, envy, pride, avarice, or ambition in the characters of men, beneath the shading by which these are often screened from vulgar cognifance; who, with regard to intellectual endowments, shows what conduct was directed by judgment, what by caprice, what by passion, and what by clear and comprehensive recollection in the persons of whom he treats; we may observe that this author obtains the ultimate purpose of his profession effectually; and that the critic who distinguisheth the instances in which these are successfully or unhappily delineated, differs as widely from the most exact chronologer as he who promotes the edification of mankind does from him who ministers wholly to their curiosity. A penetrating judge of human nature has an opportunity here of showing his discernment in a very eminent manner *, either
by

* "Paulatim ad majora tendere incipit historicus,
B b 3 laudare

by correcting the errors of the historian when he appears to have mistaken his subject by entering into a close and particular examination of the objects falling under this writer's inspection; or by supplying his defects where the end of history may not have been fully obtained, by collecting either from one fact, or from a series of transactions, remarks which render us acquainted familiarly with the personages of history, and able to explore with philosophical precision the causes of the rise, extension, and dissolution of empire.

Upon the whole therefore, when we consider the critic as required in some branches of his profession to distinguish faults from real beauties amidst a group of indiscriminate objects; to observe the delicate and almost imperceptible shades by which these approach to, and almost unite with each other; to be able in others to

laudare claros viros, & vituperare improbos, quod non simplicis utilitatis est opus. Namque & ingenium exercitum multiplici variaque materia, & animus contemplatione recti pravique formatus & multa inde cognitio rerum venit." Quintil. lib. ii. c. 4.

investigate

investigate the principles of an art with the accuracy of a philosopher, at the same time that the order and proportion of inferior parts is attentively marked; the causes pointed which have given rise to uncommon deviations in one instance, and customary ones in another; and particular passages referred to either by way of proof or example, in whose choice as well as disposition the mind perceives peculiar propriety; these, it must be allowed, are offices in which various degrees of merit are rendered conspicuous, and are calculated when taken together to show us completely that combined influence of judgment and imagination which constitutes discernment in its utmost extent.

Thus in the prosecution of this curious and delicate subject we have endeavoured to trace that union of the intellectual powers, which gives rise to philosophy, history, poetry, fables, and criticism, and to ascertain likewise, as nearly as possible, that influence which each of these separately considered requires these to exert. Eloquence (in the present point of view)

differs in nothing materially from the higher species of dramatic poetry, and, as a branch of the most essential importance in the art of which we treat, it will fall afterwards under examination. It will be observed in general, that there is a difference betwixt the simple consideration of the causes that produce certain effects, and that of the various manners in which each requires these causes to operate. In the former point of view they have been already considered; in the latter they belong to a subsequent section.

S E C T I O N VIII.

Whether that ballance of the intellectual powers from which the perfection of Composition results, can be obtained; and by what methods we may make the nearest approach to it.

FROM the preceding series of observation on the powers of the mind, as variously employed in the art of Composition, it is we presume evident, that the
real

real faults, as well as inequalities which we meet with so frequently in works of unquestionable eminence, arise in most instances rather from that disproportion which takes place betwixt one faculty and another, than from the positive weakness of any particular quality, as we are apt to think upon superficial inspection. It will therefore be universally acknowledged that a mind which had received from nature a propensity to Composition, and in which the powers, whose functions we have attempted to determine, are conferred in the highest degree, and are balanced with perfect equality, would attain the utmost excellence in this art of which human nature is susceptible. Without enquiring whether a mind participating all these advantages ever existed (a subject foreign to the purpose) it will be worthwhile to consider the more obvious causes by which this equipoise of the powers abovementioned is obstructed; and to sum up our view of Composition, as it regards the faculties of the mind by laying down
such

such rules as may tend at least in some measure to supply this defect.

I. Amidst that great disproportion of mental abilities, which the slightest observation will show us to take place among men, we shall find that nature, like a wise and impartial governor, has been careful to preserve a kind of equality in the whole species, by annexing particular faults or imperfections almost inseparably to the possession of such qualities as have the greatest tendency to render an individual the peculiar object of admiration and envy. Thus judgment, however exact and comprehensive, when not accompanied by imagination is cold and unanimated: its arguments convince, without amusing or exhilarating the mind; and we are apt to judge the trouble we have had in perusing its researches but poorly compensated by the instruction which these may have ultimately conveyed to us. The philosopher therefore, with all the pride of science, and of superior abilities, finds himself neglected because he is disqualified

to

to blend entertainment with utility, and thus discovers that he is really inferior in one important circumstance, to those whom in other articles he might justly regard as unable to rise to his sphere of excellence.

As the possession of judgment without an adequate proportion of imagination is thus naturally accompanied with some inconveniencies, as we shall find much greater disadvantages almost inseparably united with vigour, and much more with exuberance of the last mentioned faculty. Where a man's passions are strong, his feelings exquisite, and his mind susceptible alternately of almost every impression, it is obvious that his manners must be characterized by marks of inequality, which bring him down upon many occasions to the common level of his kind *, and fully com-

* As there is no question so clear but some philosophers have studied to perplex, we find the same bad consequences ascribed sometimes to reason itself, or at least deduced from the weakness which are here derived from the prevalence of a licentious imagination, and the Deity impeached for having conferred it.

compensate for such other qualifications as place him in a distant and exalted region*.

In

“Eam dedisses hominibus rationem quæ vitia culpamque excluderet. Ubi igitur locus fuit errori Deorum? Nam patrimonium spe bene tradendi relinquimus: quæ possumus falli. Deus falli qui potuit?—Si homines rationem bono concilio a Diis immortalibus datam in fraudem malitiamque convertunt non dare illam quam dari humano generi melius fuit, &c.” Cicer. de Natur. Deor. c. 31. With regard to the present subject we need only observe in answer to these objections, (which Cicero has put in the mouth of Cotta) that reason, though at many times it is subdued by the passions, yet in consequence of its obtaining in many other instances the victory over these, and giving consistence to the character, is the power by whose influence we act with steadiness and recollection; while fancy on the other hand, as impelling the passions, and acted upon by these is the cause, in the same manner of inequality and inconsistency. The one therefore only deviates sometimes from its purpose from the imperfection of human nature, whereas the other (unless when restrained within proper limits) does so at every time without exception.

* Men of genius have exhibited but too many examples of the truth of this remark. The author of the life of the celebrated Pallavicini, has very properly illustrated it from the conduct of that gentleman. His words are remarkable. “Così è pur vano che non si trovi in questa vita mortale cosa alcuna intieramente compita; & avenga sovente, che quelli, che possiedono migliore ingegno degli altri huomini riescano nelli proprie

In life therefore, considered as properly regulated by prudence, steadiness, and equability, as well as in the art of Composition, the point of perfection lies in the equipoise of these faculties acting with harmony, and extending their consequences to every part of the character. In proportion likewise, as the measure in which these are conferred becomes nearer to, or more remote from this equality, will be the excellence or imperfection of that conduct or production on which the intellectual powers are required to exert united influence.

Uncommon however as an union of this kind is, we shall find, upon reflection, that a near approach to perfection at least, if not the absolute attainment of it, is in a great degree obstructed by a defective and injudicious system of education. In order thoroughly to comprehend this matter, let us consider a little the first train of ideas that are impressed upon the mind with re-

proprie attioni, con scandalo de' semplici peggiori de gli altri huomini." Opere di Pallavicin. vol. i. p. 10.

gard

gard to the subject of this essay, and let us examine the effect of which these ideas must naturally be productive, supposing nature to have laid a foundation sufficient for bringing both the superior faculties to operate with uniform and almost perfect concurrence.

1. It is acknowledged on all hands that in the first stages of life, the inventive power appears much earlier, and arrives at maturity more speedily, than that which obtains its purpose by the process of intermediate argument *. A young person therefore entering into life with as much of both qualities as the human mind can be judged to possess, will display the former in great luxuriance before the latter

* Quintilian includes Imagination under the name of Memory, which he mentions as the first indication of genius. "Ingenii signum (says he) in pueris præcipuum Memoria est. Ejus duplex virtus: facile percipere, & fideliter continere." When he mentions quickness of perception as characteristical of memory, he obviously includes under this designation one province of the power of invention which is employed, as we have already shewn, in the original perception of the objects of criticism. Instit. lib. i. c. 3.

has arrived at its strength and consistence *. This process is perfectly natural, and suited to the first notions we form of intellectual exertion. The external beauties of creation form the first, and perhaps the highest entertainment of an ingenious and sensible mind †. Fancy having these at first impressed upon it by the senses dwells for some time with pleasure

* To this faculty, as the parent of ambition, we must refer the indications which the consummate judge of human nature above-referred to mentions as discovering genius; “*Mihi ille detur puer quem laus excitet, quem gloria juvet, qui victus fleat. Hic erat alendus ambitu, &c.*” Ibid. “*Excitabitur laude æmulatio. Nam licet ipse vitium sit ambitio, causa tamen virtutum est.*” Cap. 2.

† “*Représentons-nous donc la naissance de la musique & de la poésie en quelque belle contrée parmi des hommes heureux & innocens. Imaginons-nous d’abord des bergers qui conduisoient leurs troupeaux des le matin dans les plaines fleuries le long des paisibles rivières. Pendant le jour ils les retiroient à l’ombre des bois, & des collines. A ces heures-là jouissant du repos ou des grottes fraîches, sous l’épaisseur des arbres, ils entendoient le chant des oiseaux, & ils furent imperceptiblement excitez à imiter ces fredons & ce doux ramage.*” De la Poës. et Peint. par M. Genest. ap. Div. Trait. sur l’Elog. & Poës. vol. ii. p. 280.

upon

upon the original, and where the mind receives a propensity to Composition, proceeds either to copy these itself, or delights in the perusal of such productions as contain the most perfect models of imitation. In these circumstances it is obvious, that imagination gaining perpetual accessions of strength by exercise, while the reasoning power gains no degree of proportioned improvement, must become at last so excentric and irregular as to overpower the other in the succeeding periods of life, and perhaps to prevent its growth, in the same manner as a stem permitted to shoot beyond its proper dimensions, or to bear too luxuriant a crop, debilitates the whole trunk, and renders its other productions scanty and deficient.

It is therefore upon the first plan of education that is pursued with a mind in which nature has infused the ingredients of genius, that its future character may be said to depend. Yet do we attend sufficiently to the culture of its superior faculties at a time when so many obvious

obvious advantages may be derived from this attention? A course, I am afraid, tending naturally and unavoidably to *break* the ballance of the mental powers is taken by far the greater number of mankind. The parent or the tutor, who observes in a child the first emanations of genius (should he choose to encourage its propensities) attempts to strengthen his desire of knowledge, and to stimulate his early inclination to study by putting, we shall suppose, into his hands, books of innocent and agreeable entertainment. This conduct is surely thus far proper and judicious. Curiosity, the first passion that appears in the character, is by these means powerfully excited; and a partiality of the greatest consequence in every future period is established in favour of particular species of Composition.

The case however varies very considerably when the mind comes nearer to a state of maturity. Imagination, never fatigued with entertainment, and, where it is conferred in an high degree, running con-

stantly into extremes, acquires, by indulgence in its irregular excursions, a certain wildness and faulty exuberance, which reason is afterwards employed to correct to very little purpose. When the last likewise is either originally very unequal, or by being neglected in the first stages of life has comparatively received but a small share of improvement:—in this case quibble, antithesis, and little conceits, which discover false taste, but are apt to strike upon fancy in its age of inexperience and error, will be marked with eagerness, transfused into the first essays of opening genius, and a habit of deviating into bad composition will be established at that period, when every habit of this kind is apt to make the most lasting, and therefore the most dangerous impressions.

Yet what is the method usually employed to cultivate a propensity to this art when it is first perceived to take place?—If those performances which tend to *pollute* the imagination are withheld, such as contribute to *extend* it by the swiftest progression are supplied with liberal indulgence.

gence. Plays, fables, poetic compositions of the descriptive kind, and perhaps the extravagant fictions of romance, are devoured with insatiable avidity. Memory is loaded with a multitude of undigested incidents; and taste is by these means often incurably vitiated, when it ought to be formed upon a model the most accurate and correct.

It will perhaps be said in answer to these remarks, that as the growth of reason is comparatively slow, and its progress to maturity almost imperceptible, it must be difficult, if not impossible, to bring this power to the same perfection at which the inventive faculty arrives at any early season of life; and that as soon as it becomes capable to follow out the thread of argumentation, it is cultivated (in those at least who receive an academical education) by being applied to the study of philosophy. But this instead of clearing up the matter, renders still more inexcusable the conduct of those persons who in place of attempting to strengthen the weaker power, add force to that which is originally predo-

minant.—Let us see how this reasoning would hold when applied to the common occurrences of life.—A father we shall suppose has two sons, the one with a strong and healthy, the other with a feeble and delicate constitution. It is indispensably necessary that by athletic exercises, perhaps by hardy culture, and by the use of all the methods usually employed to render the body robust and vigorous, the latter of these should, if possible, be made as able to support fatigue and to combat difficulty as the former. Would he judge it an expedient proper to be used, if any man should suggest such a method, to strengthen by every means the firm and durable constitution, and leave that which stood in need of the greatest assistance upon the precarious hope that nature might at last make an effort in its favour? Or granting both to be originally equal in strength, but one of them advancing in stature and intellect much faster than the other, would he deem it rational to overlook him who required the most assiduous attention in order to preserve the original equality,

equality, and bestow this wholly on the other, whose progress to maturity might indeed be quicker, but by no means surer than that of the former, properly directed?—In circumstances of this nature no man is at a loss to judge of the most reasonable means, and to know the method that is most eligible whether he pursues it or not.—Whence then, it may be asked, ariseth the difference betwixt the expedients made use of in similar cases to strengthen the body, and those that are applied to invigorate the faculties of the mind?—The cause is obvious. In the first mentioned case, reason receives immediate and convincing evidence from the senses: in the last, without any information by this canal, the mind is left to form a theory for itself. As men therefore in general are by no means qualified for abstracted speculation, individuals are governed by the established customs of the world; and thus one intellectual power is permitted to acquire almost unlimited dominion before an attempt is made to im-

prove the other by a regulated plan of education.

Upon the hypothesis here laid down, a discerning reader might find it perhaps no very difficult matter to trace those astonishing inequalities which are to be met with in performances of the highest eminence to their original source, at least in many instances. It appears to me unaccountable upon any other principles, in what manner authors who at one time shine in the sphere of superior excellence, at another sink into the most puerile levities. Intellectual operation when directed by judgment, is uniform and consistent. A man who estimates with precision and propriety the comparative value of great objects upon one occasion, will (if his taste is not vitiated by prepossessions acquired before his reason came to maturity) display the same perspicacity in judging of such as are of less importance at another. But receiving a particular bias to some species of false Composition, in the same manner as a man, otherwise of good principles,

ciples, gains the habit of indulging a particular passion, his judgment is unable to restrain this propensity in the future periods of his life, and he sees the defect in others, without being equal to the task of correcting it in himself.

2. Thus far we have proceeded upon the supposition that imagination is originally prevalent in the mind; and we have shewn in what manner a wrong plan of education tends to strengthen the bad consequences of which this disparity is naturally productive. It must, however, be acknowledged, that when reason happens to preside eminently over the other powers, these consequences are not likely to fall out, at least in the first and earliest season of life; and in order therefore to preserve an inequality betwixt the two ruling faculties, those propensities, which in the former instance are to be moderated in the latter, may be indulged with some degree of freedom.

It is natural for every man who possesseth the least spark of genius, to turn his thoughts at first upon works of fancy

and invention. A desire of this kind in a man whose understanding is solid and comprehensive, but his powers of invention greatly inferior, ought to meet with encouragement, unless it should be carried obviously to an extreme, which will rarely be the case. Such a pursuit tends to invigorate and to extend as much as possible, a faculty which it is necessary to cultivate, and whose original inferiority in this last case, will leave no room to dread the effects that arise only from its wildness and luxuriance. When the real character however begins to be perceived, and the *bias* of the mind determines its choice of objects, a man possessing naturally no great share of imagination is in hazard of crushing it altogether, by giving way to that course of study in which perhaps he is principally fitted to excel. At this time he begins to fix all his attention upon the acquisition of solid and edifying knowledge as it may be deemed, and in the pursuit of this, neglecting that exterior polish, and those beauties which are essentially necessary to render this knowledge sub-

subservient to any valuable purpose, he becomes assimilated to writers who ought by no means to be regarded as standards of imitation; and fees, perhaps when too late, others successfully employed in a province which his own inattention has disqualified him to occupy.

But these, however material, are not the only consequences which necessarily arise from neglecting to improve the inventive faculty when it is originally inferior to the understanding. We have already shown in what manner discernment is constituted by the union of both, and what qualities it derives particularly from a vigorous imagination *. These as they must necessarily lie dormant, or be even annihilated in the mind, when that power upon which they depend remains uncultivated, will leave a deficiency so obvious as not to be compensated by the possession of reason alone in any extent we can assign to it. A reader destitute himself of this penetration will observe perhaps

* Sect. iv. p. 92.

only that a work is cold and wholly uninteresting, even when the arguments are clear and convincing in the case we have stated, without tracing exactly this defect to its original. But he who is qualified to judge of its influence on the minds of others, from that which it exerts on his own, will miss in such a performance those happy illustrations which render arguments forcible as well as perspicuous; and will observe in what instances these might have been strongly impressed upon the mind, by having fixed upon a few decisive criteria, instead of having entered into a minute and tedious detail, from which he ariseth in some measure disgusted.

It is with the art of Composition in this case, as with all other subjects of what kind soever. Extreme indulgence in any propension (especially in the first part of life) will always have the most pernicious tendency. We observe the effects of scholastic education, even in that work which immortalizeth the genius of Milton, as the philosophical disquisition into which Pope was led (probably by the contempt
he

he had for descriptive poetry) appears to have curbed the exertions of a genius otherwise inventive, sublime, and diversified *. Young, on the other hand, seems to have impaired his reasoning powers, or at least to have prevented their full exercise, by a conduct altogether opposite. His moral observations are often excellent; his language is highly ornamented, and he rises often to a wonderful pitch of sublimity. But his judgment, in some parts of his writings, would seem to be equal to tasks †, in the execution of which we find it after all to be deficient. By having formed himself at first upon false models, his taste appears to have suffered consider-

* This observation (if I am not mistaken) is somewhere made in an ingenious Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope. He used to call descriptive poetry as absurd a composition as a feast made up of fauces. *Ess.* p. 51. This surely was not the result of that impartial reflection which preserves a just medium in its decisions; and had not Pope's imagination been uncommonly luxuriant, an adherence to this opinion would have rendered his composition spiritless and prosaic.

† In the conduct of some of his tragedies for instance, and in his *Universal Passion*.

ably, and his reasoning, when closely examined, is commonly lame and dissatisfactory *. In short, he is an excellent painter, but a bad philosopher. His loose remarks are frequently just and striking; but his arguments want strength and propriety.

II. As we have thus endeavoured at some length to investigate the causes arising from our own conduct, by which the equipoise of the intellectual powers is principally obstructed, it is only further necessary to enquire by what methods these may be most effectually removed, and the mind fitted by nature to excel in Composition be qualified to approach as near as possible to perfection in the art.

Every man of reflection will acknowledge that the step requisite to the attain-

* “ C’est une consolation pour un esprit aussi borné que le mien d’être bien persuadé que les plus grandes hommes se trompent comme le vulgaire.” Volt. It is making a proper use of such failings in a great genius to consider these as evidences of that *equality* which obtains upon the whole among mankind, as we have formerly observed, whether in this particular instance here adduced we have justly assigned the cause of these or not.

ment of this important end, must be taken by detecting *the particular bias of the mind*, to whatever objects it may be supposed originally to point. This, among the variety of human characters, is in some situations perfectly easy, and in others a work requiring the greatest attention, and no small share of discernment. In every case, however, without exception, where any propensity to the art of which we treat takes place in the mind, a penetrating judge will discover it in the first rude essays, which may be properly denominated the simple effusions of the heart. In these circumstances, by comparing two draughts on the same subject (the execution perhaps of a task) by a young person endowed with this disposition, and by another, at the same time of life, who is wholly divested of it, or who possesseth it in a very inconsiderable degree, he will observe an obvious difference either in strength and propriety of epithet, comparative regularity of parts, or an easy flow of expression. The attempt of the latter (if the sentiments and diction are not borrowed,

rowed, with little or no alteration, from the first book he can meet with on the subject) will be stiff, affected, and the visible result of application and labour. It might perhaps be deemed chimerical to affirm, that it could be possible to discover in any art but that of poetry, the particular branch of Composition to which the mind hath received a bias. The mental powers must be allowed to open at leisure in ordinary cases, before we can pronounce with certainty upon the course which these may be presumed most probably to pursue. It ought however to be observed, that we shall find ourselves much mistaken if we suppose a genius for Composition to be indicated at this time of life merely by an inclination to reading and study. This disposition, though it is indeed an inseparable concomitant of the talent we have mentioned, is by no means an indication that it actually subsists.— Though no man ever possessed the former of these without the latter, yet we meet with innumerable instances of men who can peruse with pleasure the writings of others,

others, and are yet unable to execute with grace and mastery themselves. It is therefore, only by an attempt to execute that the existence of this uncommon qualification can be properly ascertained*.

Perhaps in very early life, when a young person begins to discover some degree of genius, but in such a manner as that it may be impossible to estimate the comparative strength and proportion of his faculties, nothing can produce a happier effect on the mind, than little tales inculcating an obvious moral, conducted in the

* Διο και την Ομηρου ποιησιν (says an ancient moralist with great propriety on the subject of fable) και τους πρωτους ευροντας τραγωδιαν αξιον θαυμαζειν· οτι κατιδοντες την Φυσιν των ανθρωπων, αμφοτεραις ταις ιδεαις ταυταις κατεχρησαντο προς την ποιησιν. Ο μιν γαρ τες αγωνας και τες πολεμους των ημιθεων εμυθολογησεν· οι δε τες μυθας εις αγωνας και πραξεις κατεσησαν· ωσε μη μονον ακουσους ημιν, αλλα και θεατους γεγενησθαι. From these remarks he draws very justly the following conclusion (which shows his knowledge of human nature,) Τοιςτων ουν παραδειγματων υπαρχοντων δεδεικται τοις επιθυμεισι τους ακρωμενους ψυχαγωγειν οτι το μιν νουθετειν και συμβουλευειν αφεκτεον. Εκεινα δε γραπτεον και λεκτεον οις ωρωςι τους οχλους χαιροντας. ΙΣΟΚ. προς Νικοκ.

simplest method, and expressed with the utmost conciseness and perspicuity. Besides the tendency which these naturally have to form the heart to the love of virtue, the young reader will find his ideas clear and unembarrassed in the pursuit of so simple and easy a detail, at the same time that his desire to imitate will be greatly encouraged by having a pattern set before him which he can copy without difficulty. By these means likewise an early relish is acquired for genuine and natural beauty:—the mind, before it has obtained a sufficient degree of discernment to separate false from real excellence, will insensibly imbibe a prepossession in favour of the last; and its powers will gradually be called out into exercise as it contemplates pictures of human life approved upon reflection, and suited to those ideas which on the first view of things are so naturally and unavoidably suggested.

As we have already seen that fancy makes its appearance sooner, and shoots into more vigorous exertion than the faculty of understanding, it will no doubt
be

be proper, that in those compositions which are first perused by young persons there should be something calculated to amuse and soothe imagination. This end may be gained by a very simple train of incidents. In a short and plain allegory the moral appears so obviously as to make an impression on the judgment and the memory even though this is almost imperceptible and involuntary. When the fable becomes more various and complicated, imagination is either bewildered in the labyrinth of conjecture, and its first conceptions are obscure and intricate; or it is apt to dwell upon such circumstances as are most wonderful and remote from its original ideas. In either of these cases the work of instruction is at an end. He therefore, who would form the mind to excellence in the sphere of Composition, and would preserve as nearly as possible the balance of its principal powers, ought to take particular care that its earliest notions be clear, appropriated, and fully comprehended. That compass of ideas which it is fitted to take in ought to be

marked with the utmost accuracy; and every successive object to be illustrated in such a manner as that it may be accustomed to canvass subjects with attention, and to express its sentiments with ease and perspicuity. This strain of gradual and progressive education resembles, methinks, rural life in places distant from the noise of cities. All is seemingly calm and still. To the eye in the early season of spring, but few traces of industry and labour are conspicuous. But in the mean time the buds are insensibly expanding with their fruit; the sun is exerting more powerful influence; the herbage is imperceptibly advancing to maturity, and the business of the field is going on.

When we follow the mind in its progressive state, as a more improved and open organization gives it a larger sphere of exertion, we are no longer at a loss to discover its prevailing bias, and to determine the particular sphere of its exercise. In this situation, a man of discernment will endeavour to follow the lead of nature as closely as possible, without attempting to
effectuate

effectuate too much at once. It must be obvious for instance, that to engage a young person of lively imagination at once in abstracted and metaphysical researches ; or to confine another, whose coolness and sagacity might fit him for these last, wholly to the reading of novels and poetry, would be a method totally irrational, from which no good consequence could result. Instead of strengthening the faculty of reason in one case, or that of invention in the other, such conduct could answer no other purpose than that of producing languor and inattention, if not disgust and satiety in both. Reflection will therefore suggest to us that by continuing to grant the power that is prevalent some degree of indulgence, while at the same time we engage the person in whom an inequality is perceived in pursuits whose *principal* tendency is to cultivate that which is weaker, we shall most probably obtain the end at which we propose to arrive by a well-conducted process of education. In order to exemplify this general theory, let us

consider each of these cases a little more particularly.

In a preceding part of this work* we have endeavoured to point out the marks by which we may ascertain the predominance of imagination. Supposing then these indications to obtain so sensibly in any one instance as that the mind may be apt to be too much influenced by this irregular faculty, perhaps no method can more effectually conduce to improve the understanding, than engaging the young person insensibly in the study of those branches of moral philosophy which are most easily comprehended, and by being naturally susceptible of elegant illustration, are calculated more happily than any other subjects to convey instruction and entertainment by the same canal. Our own language abounds with so many excellent performances of this character, that the objection of being compelled to wait until we have acquired another for this end is happily superseded. The philosophy of

* Sect. iii.

Addison in his *Spectators* and other periodical essays, is adapted in a particular manner to accomplish this end. The many natural and elegant graces that are thrown into the prose compositions of this amiable writer, the harmonious structure of his periods, the variety and importance of his subjects, his unaffected simplicity, and that vein of inimitable humour which is displayed in his principal characters; these circumstances, united with justness and propriety of sentiment, render the philosophy of this author fitted peculiarly to form the taste, and improve the understanding of him, whom if left to his own direction, fancy and inexperience might seduce into error.

By the study of the best writers on subjects relating to life and manners, the mind is not only prepared by the most gradual progression for entering into severer philosophical disquisition, but its thoughts will run in that channel of observation which is favourable to the exercise and to the culture of reason. It will by these means be habituated to reflect

on its own operations, and by attending to such sentiments as relate immediately to itself, will learn to correct propensities, or to avoid prepossessions, whose consequences on the character and conduct of others it may find particularly detailed and exemplified. As soon as he on whom nature hath conferred a talent for the higher branches of Composition, enters thoroughly into this series of moral observation, his natural desire of imitating the models that are submitted to his cognisance, will lead him to attempt something himself in a strain similar to that which he perceives to have obtained universal approbation *. By every effort of this kind (dictated perhaps originally by an ambition of excelling) the understanding will

* This method the best and most intelligent writers recommend, as at the same time a test of genius in the art, and the best means of its improvement. “On ne s'exerce presque jamais a l'eloquence par la voye la plus ordinaire & la plus seure qu'il y a pour y parvenir qui est l'exercise frequent de la Composition : a quoy il faut s'appliquer avec quelque sorte d'assiduité pour en acquerir l'habitude : car rien n'est egal a l'avantage qu'on en recoit.” Rap. Reflex. sur l'Eloq. p. vi.

acquire an accession of strength; and reason will learn to judge of its objects with superior accuracy, compass, and precision. There is a very great difference betwixt that improvement which may be obtained by taking a remote and distant view of instructive subjects, though perhaps as particular as the distance will permit, and the benefit acquired by bringing a certain train of ideas near as it were to the mind, and by endeavouring as much as possible to transfuse their spirit into a copy. In the first case whatever advantage is gained must be the result of leisure and application. But in the last, the mind, like the eye surveying attentively a variegated prospect, will follow out openings that are imperceptible at a distance, until it discovers the objects for which these were contrived:—imperfections in the general design, as well as beauties that escape common observation, will become conspicuous:—in short, new avenues of sentiment will be gradually disclosed:—and the man accustomed to pursue a thought through all its consequences will proceed to form

a theory for himself in one case, as he lays out an original draught of cultivation and policy in the other; indebted only to his instructors for the first general principles upon which the work is conducted.

To the perusal of works of this nature by persons of the character we have delineated, we may add the use of such critical performances as tend to form a correct and elegant taste in the different branches of the fine arts*; as well as to give exercise to the understanding by accustoming it to accurate and particular investigation. The selection of various examples by which a theory is illustrated in these productions, will agreeably amuse the imagination of a young genius, and emulation will be excited in favour of such beauties as the writer finds it most easy

* I mean here that kind of criticism (to adopt the language of an eminent writer) “*quæ auctores cum cæteris scriptoribus qui eadem tractant comparat; ut per hujusmodi censuram studiosi & de librorum delectu moneantur, & ad ipsam lectionem eorum instructiores accedant. Atque hoc ultimum, est criticorum tanquam cathedra, &c.*” De Augment. Scientiar. lib. vi. p. 422.

to imitate *. The blemishes likewise that are to be met with even in the most approved standards of Composition, appear in a much more striking light when set in opposition to their excellencies in a critical examination, than when we survey the work as a whole, and are inattentive to the source from which inaccuracies proceed, even supposing that we have observed these superficially. Care however ought to be taken that the performances of this cast that are put into the hands of inexperienced readers may neither be too philosophical, nor such as dwell upon minute and trifling imperfections. A man possessed of exuberant imagination will probably in early life be too lively and volatile to enter with attention into the disquisition of the former; and the latter will either cramp his genius too much by rendering him timid and diffident, or will discourage him altogether by producing

* “*Nam crescit cum amplitudine rerum vis ingenii* (says an author of discernment) *nec quisquam illustrem orationem facere potest nisi qui causam parem invenit.*” *Dial. de Causa Corrup. Eloq.*

absolute despair of obtaining perfection in the art. Mere philosophers, and men of mere fancy, are commonly the worst critics imaginable. The one writing wholly from the head is only able to execute the mechanism of his work, and is disqualified to apply his own rules with propriety; while the other throws out the reveries of a heated imagination without coherence, meaning, or proportion.

We must again have recourse to the last mentioned amiable writer, as one of the fittest in every sense to form the mind in the earliest stages of human life. There is not perhaps in the works of any critic whatever, an happier mixture of sound judgment, and of temperate imagination, than in the essays which Addison has left us on the subject of Criticism. His Critique on the Paradise Lost (however a few superficial readers, incapable to think for themselves, and floating like feathers upon the current of opinion, may affect to despise it) discovers true taste, warm sensibility, and an exquisite discernment of poetic beauty and defect. Deeper and
more

more philosophical disquisition may perhaps be found than the critical works of this author present to us; but these last, in consequence of their temperature in this respect, are particularly adapted to the period we are at present contemplating. I can never take up any of this admirable writer's more serious pieces without applying to his manner the character which Cicero gives us of the style of philosophy.—
“*Mollis est enim oratio philosophorum & umbratilis. Nihil iratum habet, nihil invidum, nihil atrox, nihil astutum, casta, verecunda, virgo incorrupta quomodo **.”
Perhaps Mr. Hurd's ingenious essays on this subject, those of Johnson, and a few of the best French critics may be here recommended with propriety, as calculated in a particular manner to improve the judgment of a young genius, and to form his taste to correctness and perspicacity. He will be taught by these means to think with precision, to decide upon sure principles; and having once learned to distin-

* *De Orat. lib.*

guish betwixt genuine beauty and that which hath only its appearance, he will acquire an early habit of imitating the one of these, and of avoiding the other.

Should any other course of reading be thought necessary to complete the system of education that is proper at this period for the improvement of the understanding, we would venture for this purpose the study of natural history. A judicious performance on this copious and interesting subject, hath indeed an obvious tendency to call out all the powers of the mind into successive exertion, and is calculated beyond all others to excite and to gratify that curiosity which is stirred up in a reflecting mind by objects conveyed to it by the canal of sensation. As no theme of whatever kind, contains a more diversified series of objects than that of natural history, so there is not perhaps any in the prosecution of which more various degrees of merit have been rendered conspicuous. That part of it which relates to the generation, the species, and the organization of insects, like many other subjects excellent

lent in themselves, and tending to produce emolument to the reader, yet hath been followed out by authors whose hearts perhaps were better than their understandings, with so much minuteness as hath exposed both themselves and their subject to ridicule. The theme however in itself is undoubtedly noble, as it tends to enlarge our ideas of the power and wisdom of that Being who has not only peopled the world with such inexhaustible variety, but has with wonderful attention adapted the organs of the smallest insect to its peculiar necessities, and has directed the objects around to afford it a succession of suitable supplies.

But the circumstances after all which a man of great imagination will principally take pleasure to contemplate, are those parts of this science which lay open the grandeur, the magnificence, and the utility of the works of nature. Accordingly, we find that the birth and generation of things, the formation of the earth from chaos, the original and the employments of its first inhabitants, the produc-
tions

tions of seas, rivers, mountains, &c. were the themes both of the earliest poets and philosophers *, inspired as it were by the powerful

* This truth will be acknowledged by all who have any knowledge of antiquity. The bards of these early days united in their own profession the character of poets and philosophers, but these last attempted not to occupy the sphere of the first. Yet their subjects were the same *Προτέρων μὲν ἐν ΠΟΙΗΜΑΣΙ ἐξεφῆρον οἱ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΙ τὰ δογματα καὶ τὰς λόγους ὡς περ Ὀρφεὺς καὶ Ἡσίοδος*, says Plutarch on this subject. Linus, Orpheus, Melampus, Thamyras, Palæphatus, Pronapides, Timæus Locris, and Hesiod, authors (the two last excepted) some of whose writings are wholly lost, and the others preserved in broken fragments, all of them began their songs at that period.—“Cum nondum divinæ religionis, non humani officii ratio colebatur: nemo legitimas nuptias viderat: non certos quisquam inspexerat liberos, &c.” Cicer. de Inven. but—*ἀμὰ πάντ’ ἐπεφύκει* “all things were jumbled together:” and the formation of the universe from this chaos was the subject of their songs.

Principio cælum ac terras camposque liquentes

Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titaniaque astra

Spiritus intus alit: totamque infusa per artus

Mens agitat molem.

VIRG.

To this investigation they gave the name of THEOGONY, which (as a learned modern writer observes) “is a system of the Universe digested and wrought into an allegory:—a composition made up of infinite parts, each of which has been a discovery of
“itself,

powerful voice of nature, and led to survey divine wisdom in the workmanship of the Deity.

“ itself, and is delivered as a *mystery* to the initiated.” Enq. into the Life of Homer, p. 99.—The philosophers treated this subject more systematically, without the images and licence of poetry. The Ægyptians ascribed the origin of things to matter or earth *; Thales the Milesian, to water †; Plato, to the four principles, fire, water, earth, and air, put together and supported by an invisible and infinite mind ‡; Lucian humorously, but in a spirit truly philosophical, ascribes the mixture of these elements to Venus, or the principle of love §; and Phornutus has explained in a very distinct manner the offices of every deity in the generation and conservation of things, discovering by these means the important truths that are shrouded so effectually beneath the veil of poetic allegory ||. As it appears, therefore, that these fathers of science who hung out the *first lights* to mankind dwelt successively upon the subjects here recommended, most of them at periods when the *human mind* with regard to knowledge was in its infancy, and susceptible of any impressions whatever; no subjects more apposite and instructive can be proposed to the young and inexperienced, than those which were originally judged so important, and which are productive of such obvious emoluments.

* ΔΙΟΓΕΝ. ΛΑΕΡΤ. προοίμ. p. 7.

† Id. Θεολ. p. 18.

‡ Id. Πλατ. 229.

§ ΛΥΚΙΑΝ. Ερωτ. Oper. vol. iv. edit. Basil. p. 195.

|| ΦΟΡΝΟΥΤ. περι των θεων φυσ. παρ.

When from contemplating in this manner the earth in general and the bodies revolving around it, we come to consider its various strata, the minerals hid in its bowels, and that inexhaustible store of materials which it contains for all the purposes of man; the understanding engages in an enquiry at the same time curious, entertaining, and instructive. It ought however to be observed, that a general sketch of these subjects calculated rather to stimulate than to gratify curiosity, will be sufficient in very early life to convey as much knowledge as a judicious instructor will judge it expedient to communicate. Nothing is productive of worse consequences, particularly upon young persons of genius, than an attempt to lay before them at once the whole extent of an art, and to hurry the mind as it were before it is arrived at a state of sufficient maturity into intricate speculations, whose evidence after all may be principally conjectural and presumptive. That this is the case with those who have wrote on Natural History, is evident from the various hypotheses

theses that have been formed of the origin of rivers, fountains, and volcanos; of the causes that give rise in particular instances to eruptions, inundations, and hurricanes, and other extraordinary phænomena of the same kind. The perusal of different theories on these subjects answers only the purpose of opening an inlet to sceptical principles; and by involving the mind in a labyrinth of doubt and error, renders it unable to range its ideas with precision, and to express these with perspicuity. The method of proceeding from the simplest views of a subject to more enlarged and compounded exhibitions, is exactly analogous to the manner in which we find it necessary to proceed when young persons are instructed in the knowledge of those languages which it is judged proper to teach them, (with what expediency we shall see afterwards) almost as soon as they are capable of distinguishing objects. That tutor, who, as soon as his pupil had learned the first elements of Greek and Latin, should put into his hands Thucydides, Pindar, Tacitus, or Persius, would surely

be censured as having acted in a very absurd and irrational manner. We suppose that the man, at whatever age, who is acquiring these languages can for a time take in but a small compass of ideas. We extend these gradually by leading him from the plainest and most intelligible writings, to such as by a more complicated construction of words require application and exercise to be thoroughly comprehended. By this process the explication of difficult passages becomes at last easy: we grow familiar with particular idioms, and are able to transfuse these into a copy: we enter without perplexity into the whole phraseology, and are qualified to impart our knowledge to others by that method which experience hath shown to be successful with ourselves.

By beginning therefore with disclosing those works of divine wisdom that are conspicuous in the formation and exercises of the various classes of insects; by describing the manner in which these are fitted so admirably for the purposes of their creation; their little arts, policy, government, settlement,

settlement, and excursions, a mind endowed with any portion of genius will engage in a most agreeable and instructive research. While imagination will dwell upon the wonderful and astonishing in this enquiry, judgment will find its investigation considerably enlarged by studying the manners of these and the desires by which they appear to be animated*; as well as by observing particularly the marks that serve to discriminate either individuals of the same tribe, or the different species from each other†. Its ideas of infinite wisdom

* — communes natos, consortia tecta
Urbis habent, magnisque agitant sub legibus ævum;
Et patriam solæ, & certos novere penates.
Venturæque hyemis memores, æstate laborem
Experiuntur, & in medium quæsitæ reponunt,
Namque aliæ victu invigilant, &c.

Virg. Geor. iv. l. 153.

† The divine poet, whom we have quoted above, makes a noble use of the employments of these tribes, by making these inculcate some sublime maxims of philosophy.

His quidam signis, atque hæc exempla secuti,
Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis & haustus
Æthereos dixere: deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cælumque profundum.

wisdom will be inconceivably augmented, and its curiosity supplied with the highest gratification, when by advancing gradually in its enquiry it finds the whole visible works of the Deity tending to produce the most beneficial purposes; and even those in which a superficial view might seem to

Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas.

Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri

Omnia: nec morti esse locum; sed viva volare

Sideris in numerum, atque alto succedere cœlo.

Ibid. l. 219.

The genius of Virgil shines no where more conspicuously than when it is thus employed in conveying the most momentous truths to the mind from subjects apparently simple and unimportant. In this province of genius, beyond all others, it may be said to deserve the denomination of *creative*, as the author in some sense exhibits an imitation of the divine mind by striking the unexpected light of instruction from a theme which at the utmost promises only a little transient entertainment. We observe with admiration the compass and extent of that mind which could inculcate from the little labours of insects the omnipresence and immensity of God, as the vital principle spread through the universe, and the immortality of the soul which proceeds from, and mixes at death with divine essence, which could inculcate these doctrines with propriety as growing out of its subject, and naturally coalescing with objects so apparently incongruous and remote!

point

point out irregularity, contrived upon cloſer examination for ends of great and obvious importance.—Thus, by following out a digeſted plan, the underſtanding will be improved by a ſure, though an almoſt imperceptible progrefſion; and the mind will acquire an habit of tracing effects to their cauſes with juſtneſs and accuracy, as ſoon as it is capable of forming an eſtimate of the comparative value of the objects that ſurround it.

Among the many works to which this copious ſubject hath given riſe in our own country, there are few calculated to answer all the ends which it is here propoſed to bring about. Derham, in his *Phyſico-Theology*, has indeed explained ſome parts of Natural Hiſtory in a very clear and ſimple manner:—but his ſtyle is unhappily ſo vulgar and unanimated, that we can ſcarce recommend his work (though otherwiſe valuable and judicious) to thoſe who ſtudy to improve the intellectual powers by whoſe influence the mind is qualified for *Composition*. Ray, Weſley, and ſome others, who have wrote on the

same topics lye open to similar exceptions. The larger compilations on the other hand, either collected from books, or the result of the author's own observation and experience, are by far too abstracted and philosophical either to improve or entertain an inexperienced reader. Happily however for our present purpose, the work of an ingenious foreigner which is elegantly translated into our own language, and is almost in every body's hands, may be recommended with confidence, as having an obvious tendency to excite, as its author intended, the curiosity, and form the mind of youth. Few readers will be at a loss to know that the work referred to is that entitled *Spectacle de la Nature*, and contains a general view of the works of nature carried on in that method which we have recommended as most eligible in the first stages of life. The propriety therefore of recommending this work as a means to effectuate the above-mentioned purposes, must be so obvious as to stand in need of no illustration. We shall therefore only observe, that the familiar style of
dialogue

dialogue which the author hath adopted in the three first volumes, the happy selection of his characters, and that air of philosophical negligence which is supported through the whole, give this performance advantages in point of entertainment equal, if not superior, to most others on the same subject *.

Having thus endeavoured to lay open that system of education which may be most favourable to the cultivation of *reason* in a mind distinguished by the eminent predominancy of the power of invention, it will be a much easier task to ascertain the method by which imagination may be ex-

* Though we have here principally recommended the work of a foreign writer on the subject of Natural History, to the perusal of young readers, there are some English writers on this subject whose works may be read for the purposes above specified with utility. Besides a compendious and judicious treatise of this kind published in the Preceptor, many of Dr. Hill's pieces are curious and edifying in this branch of literature; and even Wesley, though he appears not to have studied elegance of expression in his survey of the works of nature, yet has taken such a view of these as may in a great measure be subservient to the purposes for which this study is here recommended.

tended when it is discovered to be weak and inferior in a striking degree to the former. We may lay it down as a rule from which there is no exception, that where in the spring of human life a young person discovers no very strong inclination to peruse writings whose principal end is entertainment, and in which fancy appears upon the whole to be predominant, that such a man possesseth a very moderate share of the power of invention. This last, whenever it is conferred in any considerable measure, will dwell upon such performances with the utmost satisfaction, and will single out from a whole not merely the most striking incidents, but such as certain little circumstances imperceptible perhaps to a common observer, render particularly adapted to make a strong, if not a lasting impression upon the mind.

This propensity, however, to peruse books of entertainment, is so universal among mankind in the season of early life, that it may be thought too general a criterion to ascertain the extent, or even the pre-

prevalence of an intellectual faculty in an individual. In order therefore, to judge of this matter properly a man of penetration will attend to the remarks, which, after reading an ingenious and entertaining work, will occur to the mind of his inexperienced scholar. The power of invention when obviously prevalent, will strongly indicate its predominance by making the mind select, as capital beauties or faults of a work, circumstances that relate to incidents, colouring, machinery. The man of this cast will dwell upon the scenery rather than the characters of such a performance, and passing over the consideration of a whole as formed of members proportioned to each other, will either be enchanted with the wild and luxuriant, or will select those strokes, however seemingly insignificant, whose discovery indicates exquisite sensibility.—When these marks are observed to take place, the man may with propriety be ranked among those in whose mind it is principally requisite to improve the understanding. The prevalence of this last, on the contrary, will render the general

ral disposition of such a work the object of his attention; thoughts in whatever expression these are clothed which show either acuteness or comprehension, will impress the memory when the most significant illustrations are no longer recollected; an impropriety in some train of sentiment, or in some particular occurrence, will in such a mind cancel a part of the improvement or pleasure which might otherwise be derived from either; and the fitness of a particular part as justly suited to those which make up a whole will be observed, when its beauty as an ornament will be wholly overlooked.—In this last case, therefore, the season of youth should not be permitted to pass over, without every method being taken to extend and invigorate the powers of invention. It requires no great share of attention to discover that these last reflections are not such as will occur upon the first perusal of a work to a young person of genius, if we suppose it to be principally characterised by imagination. In very early life such a man will be apt to feel a *perpetual fluctuation*

tion of thought, (if we may express it in this manner) a rapid succession of new ideas crowding into the mind as his attention is called off from one object to another; and in the midst of this internal commotion, if his thoughts are fixed by any series of incidents whatever, that particular circumstance will make the strongest impression which a glance of reflection, imperceptible perhaps at the time, recommends as that which he himself would have selected in the same situation.

So indelible however are the impressions which nature stamps upon the mind, that with regard to the present subject, in what degree soever we suppose a man to possess a talent for Composition, he will be easily distinguished, even by a superficial observer, from one who reads merely for amusement, or even from a native propensity to study and observation. The last of these as he is directed by no other motive in the reading of a work than either the entertainment he may receive from it at a vacant hour, the reputation of learning he may acquire by retailing various opinions
on

on difficult and controverted subjects, or by the necessity he finds of supplying his own want of original sentiment by gaining it from others, will be satisfied with being qualified to mark out the capital beauties of a performance, perhaps with great judgment and accuracy, but without making such remarks as discover any desire of imitation. The opinions therefore which these men form with regard to propriety of sentiment, strength of reasoning, or the proportion subsisting betwixt the inferior members of a work, may be the result of their own experience and attention;—but their remarks on the Composition (particularly of a performance in which taste and genius are displayed) are usually either retailed implicitly from the conversation of those who are esteemed the best judges; or will show such little accuracy and discernment in this matter as will leave a man even of moderate penetration at no loss to pronounce that they are out of their sphere.—We now return to the principal subject,

When

When, in consequence of some such process of observation as we have attempted to suggest, it hath been discovered that a young person is possessed of a good understanding, but a very inferior share of imagination; in order to extend this last faculty to some equality with the other, a tutor will seldom err in granting a liberal indulgence to the desire which every man of genius feels in his earliest years, to peruse works of fancy and invention; unless only when these (as is too often the case) have any tendency to corrupt the heart. A little reflection will thoroughly convince us, that this method of proceeding can be productive of no such bad consequences as might at first view be supposed to arise from it. The understanding participating in no degree of the giddiness and volatility of fancy, arrives at maturity by a progression not less sure, because it is commonly imperceptible; and, unless in some very extraordinary instances, acts not with full force until the edge and vivacity of imagination begins to subside. By strengthening therefore this last when it is very
deficient

deficient, the other it is obvious can be in no degree impaired, because in every work we shall not only find something of which reason is required to take cognifance, but when this power predominates remarkably, the mind will be naturally disposed to dwell upon every object that is favourable to the improvement of its ruling faculty, rather than to take in those sublime effusions of genius, which are calculated almost wholly for the meridian of taste and sensibility. Thus reason will continue to improve in the present instance, in whatever exercises the mind is engaged, because it will always meet with something adapted to this purpose; whereas imagination may be crushed when a man is engaged in certain pursuits which afford nothing calculated to strengthen or extend it.

In order therefore to bring the leading powers to a balance as nearly as possible, when the latter is found to be weak and disproportioned, the person distinguished by this inequality ought not only to be early accustomed to the perusal of works
of

of invention, but his preceptor will perhaps find it expedient to point out to him those *purely poetic beauties* which, deriving their origin almost wholly from imagination, are not of such a kind as he who has received from nature a very moderate proportion of this faculty might select for himself. By these means as fancy begins to extend by being kept in perpetual exercise, the mind will conceive such ideas of the sublime, the elegant, the picturesque, as well as of the correct and harmonious, in Composition, as it will be a vain attempt to infuse when the judgment is arrived at full maturity, and when taste is no longer susceptible of improvement.

We may observe further on this branch of our subject, that as the prevalence of understanding never fails to be indicated by a certain cool and sedate manner which is in some measure incompatible with the impetuosity of imagination, so the *passions* that obtain in a remarkable degree in this last instance are either wholly absorbed in the other case, or at least subsist in a measure much less perceptible. It will therefore

fore be expedient to wake the embers of those passions, and to call each successively into action, as a step indispensably requisite to promote any strenuous exertion of the intellectual powers. That we may fully effectuate this purpose, such models of Composition as are at once approved as the best standards of the kind, and may be imitated with *comparative facility*, ought to be laid before the mind when its faculties are come nearer to their full growth, and when the man is able to determine the sphere in which he is particularly qualified to excel. Thus the writings of Homer or Shakespéare will no doubt contribute to invigorate the power of invention, in the same manner as the genius of Milton is said to have been raised to that wonderful pitch of sublimity at which it afterwards arrived by his being addicted to the reading of romance. But where no great portion of fancy is conferred by nature, a man may be brought to admire the beauties of poetic Composition, and even to feel their influence, while his own conscious inferiority produceth a despair of imitation.

As soon therefore as his imagination is inflamed, and of consequence his ambition excited in very early life by having studied the works of a great genius, and by having his principal excellencies explained, illustrated, and rendered familiar; these works, as having answered their purpose, may be laid aside; and the most approved standards of philosophical, eloquent, or historical Composition will serve, by being submitted to his enquiry, to gratify that aspiring emulation which we suppose to have been stimulated by his attention to the former. By this method his mind will receive that improvement which is best suited to the bias and strength of its faculties *, and with his reason exerting the

* “ A principio caveamus (says a great genius formerly referred to, writing on a subject similar to the present) a pensis, vel magis arduis, vel magis pusillis quam res postulat : nam si *oneris nimium* imponatur, apud *ingenium mediocre* bene sperandi alacritatem obtundes ; apud ingenium fiduciæ plenum opinionem concitabis, qua plus sibi polliceatur quam præstare possit ; quod secum trahit fœcordiam. In utroque autem ingenii temperamento experimentum expectationi non satisfiat, id quod animum semper deiecit & confundit.”

the same force it might have done upon a plan of education adapted wholly to cultivate the understanding; his imagination will acquire extent and compass greatly superior to that which a plan of this kind could ever have produced. If he cannot therefore at any future period soar into the region of the sublime and the wonderful, he will learn at least to express his

De Augmen. Scient. lib. viii. p. 464. It is with much satisfaction that the author finds in a work of this great man, a rule laid down corresponding so happily to that which is prescribed in this branch of his work. It is undoubtedly true, that a man in the middle rank of genius with a moderate share of good sense will be apt, in consequence of that just way of thinking which accompanies this qualification, to have his hope of success wholly depressed by contemplating a standard greatly beyond his reach; as he, on the other hand, with the same qualities, who has confidence enough to attempt an imitation, will be ready to sink into indolence when he finds his execution so disproportioned to the excellence of his model. Emulation, as we formerly observed, may be excited by a study of this kind more powerfully perhaps than by any other; but in order to direct it properly when once stimulated, authors of merit, whose beauties may be more easily imitated; ought to be laid before a man of this character; whose mind being then unbended and easy will proceed in its course with alacrity and perseverance.

thoughts

thoughts with vigour and energy:—if his diction is seldom coloured with the glow of imagery, he will however avoid the extreme of tedious and insipid uniformity: in short, by having the sphere of his inventive power enlarged by a train of ideas passing constantly before it, in the same manner as a feeble constitution is rendered healthy by exercise; he may obtain the graces, though not the majesty of Composition; and may become a correct and masterly writer, though never a great and elevated genius.

III. As we have now attempted, in compliance with the design of this section, to investigate the causes that obstruct the equipoise of the mental powers as far as these arise from a defective plan of education, and to suggest such expedients as may contribute most effectually to prevent their consequences; it is only further necessary that we obviate an objection which some readers may make with regard to the difficulty of carrying the scheme we have laid down into execution; and the real or

chimerical value of its effects supposing the plan to be steadily pursued.

1. As to the first, it will no doubt occur to every man who reflects on this subject, that the difficulty of carrying on a process of this kind, where an end of importance is to be gained, can form no reasonable objection (especially in extraordinary instances) against the attempt. In the present case, however, we shall find upon examination no such impediments either in discovering the predominant faculty of the mind, or in applying in particular cases the rules we have laid down, as may at first view be supposed.

The degree of attention required to find out a talent for any species of Composition depends partly upon that branch of the art to which the mind hath received a bias, and partly upon the measure in which this bias is observed to prevail. With regard to the particular kind of Composition, it must be obvious, that in whatever instance the talents requisite to form a poet or an orator take place, these will,

will make so striking an appearance as to command observation, even supposing the parent to be remiss in his attention to a circumstance of this nature from indolence, or inattentive from avocation. Either of these will fall so early into his natural course as to leave no question by what spirit he is animated. It is a matter of no consequence whether the one character is, or is not mistaken for the other in the season of sport and pastime. It is sufficient that we know what may easily be ascertained, that the mind is distinguished by a large proportion of imagination. When this discovery therefore is once made, by the first essays of any kind which he throws out in the first stages of life, it cannot surely be difficult (supposing the man to whose care such a person is entrusted, disqualified for the task of superintending his education) to find men of taste, and of discernment in this respect, who will lead him into that course of study which may be favourable to the improvement of the inferior faculty.—Again, when the mind is observed to have acquired from nature a

more didactic and philosophical character, it requires not certainly either an extensive share of penetration to discern in that case that *invention* is not the distinguishing characteristic, nor any uncommon degree of judgment when this is known to engage a man in such pursuits as tend to open and enlarge his imagination. In either case it is only requisite that the same attention which is employed to teach a young person the syntax of a language, a circumstance of no great consequence as to intellectual culture, should be applied either to the faculty of invention, or of ratiocination.

2. The other part of the objection which regards the *utility* of the method we have attempted to recommend, admitting it to be carried into execution, should it be seriously proposed, will be found upon enquiry to proceed from a very defective acquaintance with the powers of the human mind. That these, considered in general, are susceptible of the highest improvement, is a truth not only universally acknowledged by the testimony of mankind, but the whole

whole system of education adopted among every cultivated people proceeds upon it as an established and irrefragable maxim. Thus as elegant manners, and an exterior polish of the most agreeable nature is acquired by living in a court, and by frequenting what is called *good company*; so wisdom, circumspection, courage, benevolence, the qualities of the heart as well as these of the head, are found to depend in an eminent degree upon the first principles that are implanted in early youth; as their exertion upon particular occasions is directed by experience. That the time of earliest youth likewise is necessary in a particular manner for the accomplishment of these purposes is evident, not merely from what reason suggests to us, but is confirmed by our observing universally that when this season, so peculiarly appropriated to improvement, is permitted to pass over without being properly employed, the mind acquires gradually a settled character, and its habits, whether good or bad, become so firmly rooted as never afterwards to be thoroughly eradicated.

If then we find by experience that the whole powers of the human mind taken together, are not only susceptible of culture, but are even moulded into a new form by the infusion of such principles as are calculated to ripen and unfold them;— is it not obvious, that the same attention which is bestowed on all, directed to strengthen that faculty which appears to be weakest, will probably be successful when it is applied with judgment, and when the *crisis* is happily fixed upon, at which assistance is indispensably necessary to bring the original seeds to maturity?— Should this reasoning be judged conclusive, no objection can lie either against the *utility* of the plan we have laid down in the present section, or the possibility in any instance of carrying it completely into execution. How far we have succeeded in our attempt to ascertain the particular means by whose use either judgment or imagination may be invigorated, the judicious reader must be left to determine.

We cannot conclude this important branch of our subject until we have made
one

one remark, which appears naturally to arise from the preceding observations. It is the impropriety of the method commonly taken to improve the mind when it is just beginning to survey and to discriminate objects. In the stages of infancy and childhood the care of a parent is very justly employed to supply the body with proper nourishment, and to render the constitution hardy and durable. It is chimerical to suppose that the mind in this helpless state can receive improvement of any consequence. As soon however as it begins to distinguish and compare ideas, the attention of those employed in the work of education appears (usually at least) to be occupied by circumstances *wholly foreign* to the principal end, if not in a great measure tending to obstruct it. The boy, as soon as the natural bashfulness and timidity (so peculiar to this season, and so characteristic of genius) is brushed off by reproof and example, is taught to prattle over a few words with a certain air of assurance, which gains him the reputation of promising parts; and in the study of
his

his native language; if his spelling and pronounciation is accurate, it is considered as a matter of no great consequence whether he understands the sentiments, allowing that these are adapted to his capacity, or whether they are such as he cannot possibly comprehend. The bias given to his mind by nature is so far from being attended to, that should imagination happen to take the lead in it, the keenness and extravagance that usually characterise it are contemplated as the criteria of uncommon genius, and are encouraged to exert themselves to the utmost. When he comes forward a little further, his intellectuals supposed to be in a state of almost total quiescence, while his body is advancing speedily in its growth, some years of the greatest importance are permitted to elapse while he is learning the grammatical part of a language, which had it been deferred a little longer he must in half the time have thoroughly understood, and his mind during this period receives no real improvement from his preceptors of any kind whatever. The study of the sciences immediately

mediately succeeds ; and having got some general knowledge of the branches of philosophy, his literary education is judged to be accomplished, and he is turned over to his own direction. The amusements in the mean time of his vacant hours in which by the indulgence of his prevailing bias he undoes whatever may be inculcated at other seasons, are passed over without notice.

By pursuing in this manner the same track indiscriminately with all, a system of education is adopted, by which, contrary to the testimony of universal experience, all men whatever in point of capacity are put upon a level. A man, perhaps eminently qualified for active, but no way fitted for contemplative life, is yet compelled to embrace the latter in which his talents are wholly misapplied ; as on the contrary, a man of genius (taking the word in its usual acceptation) hurried into the tumult of business, finds himself engaged in enterprises which he cannot bring to any conclusion ; and his abilities are lost to the public and to himself by being directed

rected to improper objects. Admitting, however, that such a man may find (as sometimes no doubt is the case) that his talents have not been mistaken; yet, from the remarks already made, it must be easy to observe, even in this case, the consequence arising from an early and unlimited indulgence of the *ruling* faculty acquiring false ideas, and gaining an habit of carrying these into exercise, in consequence of an original neglect whose effects cannot afterwards be corrected.

Some readers, I am aware, who may admit the truth of these observations, will yet exclaim that there is hardly any practicable remedy for the evil here complained of. “ In order to rectify it (they
“ will say) there must be an end of all
“ public seminaries, in which the masters
“ would find it an arduous task indeed, to
“ distinguish, amidst an indiscriminate number of scholars, the peculiar character of
“ any single person so exactly as to pursue a particular method with him, while
“ their attention is successively employed
“ to gratify many wants, and to explore
“ many

“ many characters among those committed to their charge.”—But a little recollection will suggest the answer to this objection.—Though there is no individual, however weak his intellectual powers, who would not be benefited by such a scheme as we have attempted to sketch out in this section, steadily carried into execution, and judiciously applied to the propensity of his mind;—yet in common cases, when no *peculiar* and *discriminating* quality makes its appearance, the attention here recommended is not necessary. A man of ordinary parts, fitted perhaps to go through life with approbation, but discovering no bias to any branch of the art which we here treat of, might indeed receive advantage by having the powers of his mind properly balanced by an happy education, to whatever objects these might afterwards be directed; but with regard to Composition, the neglect of that method which we have proposed as most eligible, could produce no considerable detriment. Art may indeed *polish* and *improve upon* the materials of nature, but cannot *create* these
where

where they subsist not originally. Thus to communicate an idea of what constitutes beauty, either in painting or poetry, to a man who is deprived of that internal-sense by which it is perceived, would be an attempt as ineffectual as to make a blind man a judge of colours, or to entertain the deaf with a concert of music. In instances, on the other hand, which fall out but rarely of those who discover an early propensity to some species of Composition, we have already shown that it is a matter of no great difficulty either to find out the weak side of the character, or to adopt a plan of education calculated to adjust, and to maintain the balance of the intellectual powers.

But that we may set this matter wholly on a proper footing, let us only take for granted what will surely be allowed, that men of this class are qualified to make quicker progress than others in the usual literary departments; and it will only be necessary to defer the time when they begin to acquire the rudiments of a language till a little later than ordinary, in order to

accom-

accomplish the purpose we have mentioned. The parent, or tutor, taking advantage of the crisis at which the mind becomes capable of improvement, will find nothing further requisite than to carry on in the mean time the plan laid down in this essay, or what more adapted can be substituted in its room, till by habituating his pupil to form ideas of correct and masterly Composition he gains some knowledge of excellence in the art. By this method, when he comes afterwards to read the performances of classical writers in a foreign language, he will be able without the assistance of his master to judge for himself of their peculiar characters; and having the foundation once laid by others, will by the strength of his own reflection and experience erect a proportioned and durable superstructure.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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